



WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #149!

Since we are motherfucking bi-weekly as all fucking all day, we've beefed up the ranks of the beloved Death Valley Driver Video Review- since there were folks we wanted to add and this gave us the first reason we could find. First the brilliant and incisive Ryan and now- yes- BLOCKHEAD DAN- world traveler, sideshow performer, charitable soul (who could forget his performance during the Tsunami fundraising drive? Not me. Not you.) and expert on the Mixed Martial Arts. He and young Naimark will cover the beauty of the shootfighting and we get the privilege of reading it. Ah. Bi-Weekly....

[Your cover is by the lovely and talented ANTH! HERE HERE!]

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SHINYA HASHIMOTO.

Shinya Hashimoto vs Bam Bam Bigelow- New Japan- 1990?- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: Someone posted this match the day Hashimoto died and I was fascinated by the match up. Bigelow was the most underrated big man around for a while and this was him at his peak against Hash on the cusp of his peak. The Eurosport titles address Bam Bam as "Scott Vigelow". Shinya has the beard and long hair and he is shouting at Bam Bam before they lock up. They yell in each other's face and they start bulling into each other. Shinya Hashimoto remember how to work in Florida and this could worked like a motherfucker at the P-Cola Municipal Auditorium as easily as it does here at Budokan. Bigelow leans into Hash's fat ass kicks and hits his own Enzuiguri. Bam Bam is yelling shit at Hash as Hash circles the outside of the ring. Bam Bam wrestled in Memphis long enough to throw sweet punches and was fucking great enough to take kicks to the stomach and bump gigantic to the floor off of them. God, I wish these two had feuded all throught the 90s. Bam Bam with the gnarley Snap Suplex. Hash fights out of a chinlock and misses a spinkick and goes back into the chinlock. Hash tries to bodyslam Bam Bam but Bigelow clubbingly forearms himself back to the ground. Hash ducks a forearm and gets him up for the bodyslam and brings the Elbow Drop. Hash with a nerve pinch and this really could have worked well at the Midsouth Coliseum. Hash kicks him in the back and taunts Bigelow to get up and fight. The facial expressions are as pivotal to the match as the power moves. Bigelow hammers Hash with headbutts and forearms to set up a fucking BEAUTIFUL Vertical Suplex. Bigelow misses an avalanche but lowblows Hash to stop any momentum. Hash sells the lowblow like Mocha Cota at Arena Mexico. Hashimoto avoids the Slingshoit Bodysplash by Bigelow from the apron and brings the hellish fury of two kicks and the AWWWESOME DDT. Hash with the spinning kick to the back of the head and Bam Bam fucking takes the final DDT like a motherfucking KING. Goddam, both of these were so fucking great.

PRO WRESTLING NOAH- DOME SHOW- 7/18/2005
[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

A mysterious benefactor is supplying some special folks with certain matches from this show. Here is a review.

Takashi Sugiyura/ SUWA/ Masashi Aoyagi vs Tsuyoshi Kikuchi/ Mitsuo Momota/ Katsuhiko Nakajima: FINALLY SUWA! I am becoming erect. I will blow a viscous load into my prowestle fan pants when he punches motherfucking KIKUCHI in the face and Kikuchi crushes his head with a headbutt. They water it down by sticking it in what would be the GREATEST INDIE UNDERCARD EVER: Aoyagi vs Momota, Sugiyura vs Nakajima to set up Taue vs Koshinaka in the main event. Hell, I'd drive to Nelson County to see that. Anyway, before I can fawn over this, one must watch the Professional Wrestling. Come. Let's watch. Nakajima starts off with fruity elaborate kicks to SUWA and SUWA takes them and awaits actual offence as they triple team him. Kikuchi crushes him with a flying headbutt and it isn't as electric as you would hope. Sugiyuri and Kikuchi exchange a more substantial strikes until Mimota comes in and does the Kobashi multi-chop far better than Kobashi does later. Mimota brings his Dome Show offense with a DDT. Nakajima tags back in brings some actually hatey kicks between hitting a spulex and taking fat ass foreams to the face. Aoyaggi is the all-star of the match- beating the living dogshit

out of Nakajima with the most unfruitfully embellished kicks you will see. SUWA goes all Mid-South in the corner on Nakajima with the straight punches to the face and Flying Shoulder Block before finishing the non-IKEmen trifecta with a beautiful DiBiase Fistsdrop. Sugiura beats on Nakajima, allowing Aoyagagi and SUWA to figure out ways to crush Nakajima's tender trembling genitals like a K Car at junk yard. SUWA goes with the BEAUTIFUL Toprope Elbow Drop Onto The Junk. Aoyagagi is so no nonsense with simple yet horribly hideous looking Axe Kick To The Pecker. Aoyagagi stays in and kicks the fuck out of the fun Nakajima. Nakajima spins kicks with a hope spot and HOT TAG. Mimota says, "DOME SHOW, MOTHERFUCKER!" and whips out the sweet Vertical Suplex. Kikuchi and Aoyagagi beat the fuck out of each other and you love it as it sets up SUWA and Kikuchi one on one. SUWA and Kikuchi trade punches until Kikuchi hits a Doctor Bomb to begin the 1995 AAA String Of 2 counts. Nakajima Irish Whips SUWA into Kikuchi but SUWA turns it his GIGANTIC DROPKICK and goes directly for the FUCKING! FUCKING! FUCKING! but Kikuchi backdrops out and hits the rope. SUWA slaughters him with a lariat and hits The FUCKING! FUCKING! FUCKING! for the pin. Tell me this sets up feud between Kikuchi and SUWA. Tell me that it will be longer than the pittance of time this match was allowed (and yet Kobashi gets 24 minutes to suck dick and make you hate knife-edge chops). Yeah, not long enough. I dig Nakajima because he looked good fighting out of the assbeating he takes like a pro. Yeah. Needed to be longer.

Tamon Honda/ Go Shiosaki vs Mohammed Yone/ Takeshi Morishima: Yone and Morishima are such a dream team. I was out of the loop for a while so I haven't seen Go Shiosaki yet (I don't think). Shiosaki and Morishima blow a bunch of stuff in the first two minutes. Morishima calms him down by getting him the Swastika and tagging in Yone, who starts off by kicking Honda in the face as Honda is standing on the apron. Yone immobilizes Shiosaki and tags in Morishima and they do all these Three Stooges spots where Yone and Morishima keep running into each other. Honda starts trying wear down Morishima with a Sleeper and suplexes Morishima to cut off all of his comebacks. Shiosaki hits some suplexes and a nice jumping kick before Yone can tag in. Yone kicks everybody in the face and does a nice second rope Guillotine for two. Shiosaki hits a Rolling Cradle and Yone and Morishima really can't beat the living shit out of this guy enough for me. He hits an athletic moonsault and Morishima makes the save- with he and Honda suplexing each other in response. Yone rips Shiosaki's head off with a lariat and I feel better. Morishima and Yone hitting a Flying Leg-Lariat Doomsday Device and it ruled. Yone with the SWEET Muscle Buster BOMB! for the pin. Shiosaki is going to be a big annoying star in this promotion. I'm gonna start hating him now. Not enough of an assbeating. C'mon, it's fucking Morishima and Yone. We should be identifying Shiosaki by his fucking dental records. And Honda was a complete non-factor.

Akitoshi Saito/ Shiro Koshinaka/ Masao Inoue/ Kishin Kawabata vs Akira Taue/ Takuma Sano/ Jun Izumida/ Haruka Eigen: This is quite the amalgamation of everything I love in Japanese wrestling. Kishin Kawabata, Shiro Koshinaka, Akira Taue- fuck, stick in Diauke Ikeda and I could die a happy man with this one match. Taue and Koshinaka start it off and it's so cool that the most overlooked wrestlers in the history of why the 90s supplied such great wrestling should square off against each other. Koshinaka beats Taue with his hardened ass. Taue pummels Kawabata and Kishin does what he does best- receive the assbeating of his life up to that point.

Izu with a nice elbow drop. Saito is growing the mullet back out like I would do if weren't such a fucking pussy and he and Sano wrestle for a few minutes. Saito Irish Whips Sano into Koshinaka's ROCK HARD ASS. Eigen slaps around Inoue. Kishin and Izu duke it out and wrestling fans the world over blow a load into the collective wrestledork speedo. Taue makes a cameo to make Sano's section a more heightened experience. Eigen chops Izu and it's not very good. Taue comes back in to add a little danger and a big boot. And it keeps going- if these guys were in the WWE, they would be let go because Creative has nothing for them. It's ridiculous. There are 70- SEVENTY! - four star + matches (including the best tag match in the history of wrestling, the best Junior heavyweight match series of the 80s, and the first great Lyger match) between everybody in the ring. You'd think they'd have more for them to do than to kill time in this heatless affair. BAAAH!

Mushiking vs Black Mask: I dunno. I don't wanna be a drunken dick- though at the moment I am- but I- an American who grew up in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic region in the 70s- was brought up on motherfucking Johnny Valentine and Wahoo McDaniel and Dick Murdoch beating the living dogpiss out of people. I am not alone. I like to think the commanding echelon of the armed services of the United States are 39 year old guys and gals who also experienced the same wrestling experience as I did and this mutual experience is the reason we have the greatest fighting force in the history of the earth. It would truly disturb me if I were a 39 year old Japanese man brought up on the bloodbaths and cathartic perfection of Rusher Kimura to think that this kind of match is what is supposed to be passed off as appealing to children now. Fuck that. When I was seven, Wahoo beat the living breathing fuck out of bleeding Harley Race in the Raleigh studio and I felt the importance and intensity of the moment and it made ME a better citizen and taught me what it meant to have a place in this great nation- to KNOW of my place in the wide international world and the greatness of each emotional moment- and how this was a GOOD thing, AMERICANS FEEL; AMERICANS HURT; AMERICANS WIN AND AMERICANS LOSE AND THATS HOW THE FUCKING WORLD WORKS- and wrestling- MOTHERFUCKING WRESTLING- first taught me that. Not Sunday School, not the Nixon administration, not the National Football League- WRESTLING. Japanese wrestling is just like American wrestling because the Japanese are just as perfectly fucked up as Americans. If I were a 39 year old father of four Japanese children, THIS WOULD NOT STAND. Fuck that shit. Not in my lifetime, motherfucker. (The fact that this was above average Lucharesu- with Black Mask having a better looking offense than Tanahashi and MushiKing selling an assbeating and making a better comeback than Kobashi does later- should in no way get in the way of my drunken yelling)

Yoshinobu Kanemaru vs KENTA: I am DEAN and I enjoy both of these wrestlers. KENTA has emo hair- thus impotent old men on the beloved Death Valley Driver Video Review Message Board will throw their false teeth and walkers at the TV screen and blow up their Depends in groinal rage. Kanemura has nice 80s hair- the kind Bob Mould had in Husker Du- so you are allowed to like him. I think Kanemaru came out to "Don't Wanna Know If You Are Lonely." Emo fires in with straight punches to the face and 80s postpunk fires back and it fucking rocks early. Postpunk works the arm and Emo goes matwork WILD and they stalemate. They roll around for a while. Postpunk hurts his arm early and KENTA works on it by driving it into the steel post. KENTA is fun with the high-flying to set up going back to the arm. Then he starts kicking and

Minoru Suzuki/Naomichi Marufuji vs Jun Akiyama/ Makoto Hashi looks like a mental patient. Goddam, why is a Minoru Suzuki match 38 minutes long? Hashi and Akiyama are gay with love and that makes this a fucking masterpiece. Japan is a foreign country. A beautifully fascinating foreign country. Marifuji is now there with the mask and cool ass coat. Minoru Suzuki comes out and I'm baffled at his presence in the match. Suzuki rules so I'm sure it will be great but it is a weird tagteam. Okay, the first ten minutes of this is introductions. Hashi and Marifuji are fucking GOLDEN the few minutes. Hashi makes with the basic offence and Marifuji sells like a MAN to the floor and then Hashi hits the fucking BEAUTIFUL diving headbutt to the floor. Hashi is GOD. GAY GOD. It's weird. He is fucking hardcore and more manly than anybody else like Pat Patterson was a fucking MAN when beating the shit out motherfuckers. Go watch the match against Sgt Slaughter again. Suzuki and Akiyama are also SOLID GOLD in the ring thought to a lesser extent. Akiyama then sorta sells for Marifuji. Hashi tags back in and kills Marifuji with Tony Atlas chops. Marifuji spin kicks to offense. Hashi takes a fat ass Sunset Flip off the apron that Suzuki makes it all fun by slowly forcing Hashi to let go of the rope and seal his fate of crashing back of the head first to the floor from the apron. They kill Akiyama on the

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ramp and Hashi is still vomiting blood on the floor. They beat on Hashi for a while while Akiyama is nursing his wounds. Marifuji dropkicks Hashi in the face while Suzuki is clutching him like a camel. Hashi and Suzuki tried punches and Suzuki wins. Suzuki is super heelatastic with the knee in the stomach. Akiyama truly is the finest Robert Gibson ever as they kick Hashi's ass some more. Marifuji with the Cobra Clutch. Hashi rakes the eyes to escape but can't fight out because Suzuki is a super heel and pokes him in the eyes from the apron. Suzuki tags in and is awesome being the dick- telling Hashi to tag his partner. He then suckers him into the corner and dropkicks him in the face. Marifuji with the Love Machine Splash and Hashi fights out of the Suplex to hit his own. Marifuji is awwwwwwesome cutting off Hashi from the hot tag. Hashi headbutts to make the hot tag and rubes in Japan don't understand what the fuck they are seeing. Akiyama is a house afire and Marifuji bumps big to the floor. Suzuki and Akiyama chop each other down and it rules. Hashi tags in and Mongolian Chops are no match for Suzuki's straight punches to the stomach. Hashi goes for the Suplex but Suzuki turns it into an Octopus Hold. Akiyama makes the save. Hashi enzuigiris to tag in Akiyama. Akiyama kills Marifuji like a little bitch. Akiyama chokes out Marifuji while Hashi and Suzuki beat the shit out of each other. Akiyama and Marifuji do a batch of cool counters of the Shooeey Nooey. Hashi kills Marifuji with diving headbutts and SWEET Rydeen Bombs. Hashi with the K Crusher for two. Marifuji jumping kicks to set his first Shooeynooey. Akiyama saves Hashi from a Superplex and Hashi fucking KILLS Marifuji with a toprope headbutt. Marifuji and Suzuki double team Hashi to eventually set up the Super Shooey Nooey for the pin. That was a fun match. Minoru Suzuki rules. Hashi motherfucking RULES.

Takeshi Rikio vs Hiroshi Tanahashi: God, Rikio is like TWICE as big as Tanahashi. The problem is that Tanahashi wrestles like he is half Rikio's size. Rikio sells his tiny man offense by bumping big off the apron and trying to act like Tanahashi's somersault legdrop would hurt him AS MUCH AS MOTHERFUCKING TAKESHI MORISHA OR KENTA KOBASHI CRUSHING HIM WITH A FUCKING LARIAT. So this sucks. You don't watch a Rikio match to see him try to bump big enough to make a junior heavyweight look credible against him. You watch a Rikio match for the sheer hellish assbeating. Here, he out-thinks himself. There is a fun part where Tanahashi tries to no-sell his vertical suplex so Rikio slaps him upside the head and locks in a Dragon Suplex. Okay, the match picks up when Rikio hits the BEAUTIFUL Ricky Steamboat toprope Crossbody Block for two. Then he follows with a powerslam and completely dickish Powerbomb Into the Corner. Tanahashi fights out of Superplex and hits a moonsault and dropkick and this truly is El Samuria versus Scott Norton but better on one end and worse on the other. Tanahashi overshoots a tope and goes facefirst into the announcers table- as Rikio will not make you forget Fuerza Guerrera as a rudo. Tanahashi hits a Hang Time Missile Dropkick and this truly is an approximation of Rikio versus Marifuji- then Tanahashi hits a nice Locotion German Suplex and we are all happier at the emergence of heavyweight offense in a GHC title match. Tanahashi does a Sleeper into a Dragon Sleeper variation and Rikio hits the ropes. Tanahashi brings some actual forearms into the proceedings and Rikio gets rolled up for two. Rikio fucking KILLS Tanahashi with a lariat and they are sweet enough to show again in slow motion. They smack each other a bit. Tanahashi is chopped down and Rikio hits a Stuff Powerbomb for two. Tanahashi hits a quick Small Package to counter a Backdrop and Rikio beats him down again. Rikio destroys him with a lariat for two and finally kills the little fella with THE MUSO which is

basically a Spear and Choke slam combined into one great finisher. I never for once thought Tanahashi was a threat. That's not the feeling you want in a dome show title defense. 1/2 World Wide point.

Yoshinari Ogawa vs Genichiro Tenryu: Tenryu giving a shit about shaking Ogawa's hand is un-Tenryu-esque but carries the action until Ogawa gets the Sharpshooter With the Ringpost spot. So very oddly Lucha Libre for the King of King Road Style wrestling. Ogawa being the Best Possible Sam Houston makes this quite the strange Tenryu match- but Tenryu is game and plays Arn Anderson to Ogawa's Dustin Rhodes pretty well. Ogawa with a flurry of 80s offense and Tenryu cuts him off with a submission spot. Of course Tenryu brings the point of his toe crashing into the face of Ogawa and you realize that this isn't Florida in 1989. Tenryu's old ass bumps over rail and goddam does he make me feel like a lazy useless slug. Tenryu smashes Ogawa's face into a table that Ogawa had set up at ringside- on it's end, Old School style. Details of this match make me love it. I love that Tenryu probably hasn't worked a match like this since Iron Mike Sharpe was showing him how to work in Florida in 1981. Tenryu lariats for some two counts and Ogawa has his brain busted for two. And another lariat and that's that. I pretty minor match but also super cool because it wasn't your usual Tenryu match. I want Tenryu versus Ricky Morton in NWA-Rocky Top.

Kenta Kobashi vs Kensuke Sasaki: I'm going for Kensuke. At least people don't act like he is the greatest wrestler on earth when he pretty much has the same limitations as Kobashi. Plus Sasaki/Kawada was 300 times better than any Kobashi/Kawada match ever was. So there. That's my prejudice going into this. Kobashi has hat-head while Sasaki looks well groomed. They sell a lariat and a Backdrop Driver all dramatical. I note after the knucklelock that the crowd is fucking molten for this little match. The fruity embellished chops by Kobashi were so Kanyon 98- except Kanyon wouldn't expose the biz with such an elaborate set-up for most of them. Kobashi's Piscada on the area that used to be his knees make me think that they want to do an Ode To ECW maybe? God, Kobashi is an annoying wrestler. I love Sasaki's short lariats in the corner. The top rope Frankensteiner response to Kobashi's Pescada wasn't nearly awesome as Kensuke's top rope Lariat. Sasaki's dive off the top to the floor confirms my suspicion that they got a Big Ass Extreme Bash dvd or something and fell in love with a Jerry Lynn-RVD match and didn't want to beat the fuck out of each other like heavyweight MEN. The chop no-selling section goes on forever and it's kinda like a Stiffness Rolling Cradle- in that it's too goofy to work in a way that stiffness should work. God. It's unwatchably crappy. Maybe they can do 25 Rolling German suplexes and 125 rotation Giant Swing. Welcome to the antithesis of everything cool in BattlARTS and anything cool about the Sasaki vs Kawada match. Kensuke no-selling the SuperPlex made me hate Sasaki so this match is a total wash. And God, I just fucking hate Kobashi though he does take Northern Lights Bomb to the floor like a pro. Kobashi's babyface comeback at the end is more annoying than a Kevin Nash SHOOT! promo. They kick out of a bunch of stuff at the end. See, this is why Kawada is a great wrestler and Kobashi is Lex Luger of high end Japanese wrestling. THIS is Kobashi's idea of a New Japan match. Sasaki/Kawada and Hashimoto/Kawada was Kawada's idea of a New Japan match. Compare them in your head. YEESH.

Toshiaki Kawada vs Mitsuhara Misawa: They toy with beating the shit out of each other before beating the shit out of each other. Kawada kicks the man he hates in the face to counter being elbowed in the face by the man who hates him. The stomps to the back of the head as Kawada walks around to the half-crab was a dickishly nice touch. I dunno. Shouldn't a match of this magnitude- legitimate hatred after a two storied careers and- what?- SIX YEARS of build-up- resemble something more like a Slaughter/Patterson streetfight than Akiyama/Omori Champ Carnival 1998 first round 10 minute draw? Luckily, it picks up some as Kawada kicks Misawa through the ropes to the floor but even then they can't sustain a feeling of hatred that this match needs. Misawa's Tiger Suplex to the floor? TIGER SUPLEX!?!?! I thought he legitimately hated this guy? Why wouldn't he kill him with a Tiger Driver 91 on the floor? Misawa just doesn't beat the shit out of Kawada like the history behind this match would dictate. Kawada on offense at least has some piss behind it- as he crushes Misawa's face for no-selling a running kick to the face. Kawada pushes the ref out of the way to kick Misawa in the face. That feels like the level of hate you need. They "brawl" on the ramp and you would be shocked to learn that each of these guys wrestled motherfucking Stan Hanson a thousand times in their respective careers. You'd think some semblance of Texas Ass-Stomp would have rubbed off on one of them. Instead, Kawada hits a powerbomb and he wanders back to the ring. He runs back to Misawa and does the lower-tier W*ING Deathmatch guy Walk Together Holding Each Other's Hair. They elbow each other in the face and the intensity picks up. Kawada stretches Misawa plumb and I wonder why he hasn't tried to make Misawa's teeth match his own? Misawa no-sells two Released Germans and this is going to hell. Kawada kicks Misawa in the face again to drag Misawa from the point of Kobashi-ing the match. Kawada with a Brainbuster for two and they go into the finisher section which looks to be 15 minutes long. Kawada with the Ganso Bomb. For two. I think that might summarize this match. Misawa makes a comically quick comeback and this thing isn't making me forget Bleeding Ear 94. Misawa hits a batch of finishers. They trade elbows for a while with Misawa finally chooping Kawada down. They do it again and I'm thinking the whole match should have been this. Hey, Misawa wins with an elbow. Finish was good- so I hate this match less. But really- I don't think I could liked this match unless there was blood (nope), they actually had a hatefilled brawl (nope), somebody got their ear-ripped off (nope). No hate, No Dean's love. Know hate, Know Dean's love.

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Darsow Adrift

[AG]

It was a sordid life, a sorry life, a life fit to forget. This sneaking around, this 1 and 3 AM shit, this hotwire and crowbar and masterkey shtick, this black gloves, black hat, black jacket assumed name jive. Just to forget. Just to forget.

They say you can't burn the flag. What do they say to an American stud -- and don't you fucking tell me Barry Darsow was anything else! -- who renounced nationhood and went over to work for the Soviet empire. He was a blue-chipper, the real deal like Kristy McNichol. But he gave it all up for the hammer and sickle.

And the houseshow, when the cameras were off and a coked up Jimmy and Virgie would corner the newly minted Krusher Khrushchev, peppering him with questions about five year plans and the endless steppe and what Vladivostok pussy was really like -- these were the worst. Barry Darsow, for the sake of Russian global hegemony and its homunculus curse, a midcard push [and really, he came from a family of midcard humdrummers, workaday scalawags with little to recommend them but callouses and adaptability...], had to learn speeches. In Russian. It wasn't just that telltale Slavic growl he had to learn.

Luckily, he was able to say them in English. But here was the rub. The rubes wouldn't buy a Russian face. Despite Darsowmania runnin' wild, Darsow had to become hated. To become the Russian. Try as he might, it was a hard row to hoe.

This from Fayetteville: "One can make a light sort of speech about everything and nothing. (Laughter.) Perhaps such a speech would amuse the audience. They say there are some great hands at such speeches not only over there, in the capitalist countries, but here too, in the Soviet country. (Laughter and applause.) But, firstly, I am no great hand at such speeches. Secondly, is it worth while indulging in amusing things just now when all of us Bolsheviks are, as they say, "up to our necks" in, work? I think not. Clearly, you cannot make a good speech under such circumstances. However, since I have taken the floor, I will have, of course, to say at least something one way or another. (Loud applause.)"

Like Uncle Ivan and the nefarious Baron said, backstage: "This will not do. Better, Comrade! Or the Gulag -- Central States!"

But the crowd loved their Barry. No matter what of Stalin's he said -- and why he chose Stalin, rather than his namesake, has gone unremarked -- the fans loved him. In Iva, South Carolina, the fans were popping hard for that Soviet Anthem. They knew Darsow was going to do some of his Stalin shit! Backstage, Ivan fumed.

"Russia too loved by capitalist scum! Must teach Darsow Russia Growl or Cold War end! Bulldog Bob Brown have to come here be Russian. No can do!"

This was the age before Perestroika. But you wouldn't know it when Darsow did Stalin.

"I know what confidence means. It naturally lays upon me new and additional duties and, consequently, new and additional responsibilities. Well, it is not customary among us Bolsheviks to refuse responsibilities. I accept them willingly. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

"For my part, I would like to assure you, comrades, that you may safely rely on Comrade Stalin. (Loud and sustained cheers. A voice: "And we all follow Comrade Stalin !") You may take it for granted that Comrade Stalin will be able to discharge his duty to the people (applause), to the working class (applause), to the peasantry (applause) and to the intelligentsia. (Applause.)

"Further, comrades, I would like to congratulate you comrades, our workers, our peasants and our intelligentsia. (Applause.) "

"What the fuck?" asked the Baron.

"Perfidy!" Exclaimed Teijho Khan.

"We must bring him down, for the sake of Kayfabe," intoned Buzz Tyler.

"He is threatening the woooooooooooooooooooooooooooo Nature Bwoy!", said Nature Boy Tyree Pride.

And so on. A consensus emerged. For the sake of kayfabe, the cold war, the wrestling bidness if you will as we know it from my mother's loins. An army of men went down to the ring in Iva. Took down Barry Darsow. And after some reeducation, he was ready. To be the Russian traitor he was booked to be. Because the world just was not ready. For a Russian babyface. Time would pass, Darsow would die and be reborn, a Repo man, anonymous, adrift, a part of his soul dead. Dead like the glorious CCCP, Stalin's speeches, and Boris Grebenshikov. Radio silence, indeed. Repo, repo, repo.....}{P}{}{}{ENDITEM}{}{}{}{}

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Kansas State Title Tournament - April 23, 2005 - NWA Central States Wrestling
[RAVEN MACK]

Ahh...memories of Bulldog Bob Brown wearing a belt that he didn't whip his children with, or the likes of Harley Race and Dick Murdoch and Buzz Tyler wearing the championship gold...it all went away but now is resurrected in some little filthspot called Lawrence, Kansas. I only ever went through Kansas once, on a Greyhound like any real man would've, and I went to sleep with some dude sitting next to me in an Eagles t-shirt explaining the sub-genius intricacies of Don Henley's lyrical works, and I was looking out the window and it looked a certain way. Three hours later I woke up, dude was asleep so luckily I was spared the Glenn Frey chapter of his sermon, and I looked out the window - absolutely the fuckin' same. And it stayed that way. Where I am, I could go three hours and be in the mountains deep or have my feet dipped in the ocean. But to go three hours in any direction and it's the same goddamned fields it was where I started, except I passed a few towns with newer Dairy Queens than my town? Fuck that. But it helped me to understand why really stupid crap like John Cougar Mellencamp or Travis Tritt is popular. Simple flat crap like that makes sense to simple people who grow up on flatlands.

Nonetheless, I have been led to believe this here new-fangled Central States Wrestling is not all bad, and I'm interested to see it, because of the eight men in this Kansas Heavyweight title tournament, I've heard of exactly none of them. It would be great if they got all old school and it was multi-falls that went for two hours a match, and eventually Cael Sanderson beat Rulon Gardner nine falls to eight just under the four hour mark, and they held the tournament over a three-day period in a big barn that had bleachers built into the walls. But the world don't spin that slow no more baby, because MTV and getting emails on your cellphone has got us in the

modern age - where we can't love a motherfuckin' thing unless it wraps it up and brings it home fairly fast because we've got to get to Best Buy to pick up an RF modulator.

I remember hearing all those annoying sports radio ads for "Real Wrestling" for a while, so maybe that would be like the barnhouse tourney, but then again most things that advertise themselves as "real" are stupider than fuck. Let's see what Central States has to offer up...

Krow vs. Michael Strider: Michael Strider oozes this insane charisma, kind of like a CM Punk but with three parts of Tom Green's goofy personality. Krow, however, is not very good. He does a somersault flip over the top rope, but it was a goofball high spot that Strider had to wait for, as he's had to do on five or six of Krow's moves. They actually seem to be wrestling two different matches while Krow is on offense. Krow's spinning heel kick was so off the mark on Strider, who sold anyways, the commentator paused uncomfortably. Strider slap on an STF, and thankfully this is done, giving us a few quick enjoyable moments of Strider's goofy heelishness towards the crowd.

Billy McNeil vs. Nick Tyson: Billy McNeil is billed as the Irish Luchador, and he comes out in a big goofy shiny leprechaun hat, because it "locks in his magical powers" as it is explained to me by the commentator. Nick Tyson is the most regular guy you could ever imagine, except he's in black trunks trimmed in lime green. These guys all look SOOO young, but Tyson and McNeil are having a pretty decent little wrestling match here, doing the technical battle, keeping it clean thus far. Tyson starts to show his bad guyness a bit, but he's way motherfuckin' better than I ever would've expected looking at him. Tyson hits his finisher - a blockbuster - but McNeil kicks out. And then McNeil hits something called the Super Flying Karate Monkey Deathcar or something, where he stands on the second rope and picks up the other dude sideways like he's just starting to lift him for a bodyslam, but then he does a moonsault powerslam, but again a kickout. Some weird crazy finish to the match happens pretty soon, with reverse neckbreakers countered with punches to the face and then a death valley driver from a weird sunset flip position or some bullshit. This match was WAY more motherfuckin' awesome than I ever would've expected from the two vanilla dudes who walked out the curtains. WAY more.

Brett Young vs. Darrien Sanders: CSW has the handle on gimmicks already, easily. Brett Young is a white dude who's obviously down with the hip hop, and "Showtime" Darrien Sanders has a pimp cup full of "crunk juice" which he tosses in the face of some chick in the crowd. He is seconded by a short fat white dude carrying a forty ounce - "Drunken" Steve Girthy - and it's a forty of Olde English. Girthy berates the crowd for not loving him and says he's gonna drink till they care. He is the perfect Joel Gertner for Lawrence, Kansas, and he introduces Sanders, who waves at the crowd like a princess riding in a convertible in a parade, and then blows kisses. And these two guys have a really great technical start to their match as well; I can only assume that all these guys grew up in the midwest and wrestled in high school or at the local juco college. Sanders is a sweet-ass heel, not afraid to put some wood behind his chops and kicks and punches, but he seems just young enough to make putting a mouthy drunk fat guy as his manager just about perfect for now. This match is much like the last one - far better than I ever expected. These kids are all great, and look young, and you can only assume they'll gain

crispness with experience. I've still got one first-round match to see, but whichever two of all these guys can end up working a good feud could be the next Alex Shelley/Jimmy Jacobs or Matt Sydal/Delirious to partner themselves into higher profile indy stardom. Sanders wins with chicanery involving Nick Tyson.

Mark Sterling vs. Ryan Ash: Sweet, Ryan Ash knocks some fat kid's hat off and pushes him down onto the floor. Ash is your conceited shithhead, gyrating his hips barely concealed by Tapout trunks, and pointing at his eyes and girls in the crowd as if they're making a mental connection. Sterling is in a soccer warm-up jacket, looking as vanilla as they come, which means he's the big babyface in Kansas. Ash is doing all sorts of evil armbar maneuvers, which is good, because the one spot where they traded punches was some shitty punching. Sterling is taking the twistings and contortions for the better part of the match, but he snaps a quick roll-up for the win.

Billy McNeil vs. Michael Strider: What the fuck? Why are all these 22-year-olds being so great, technically? Who the fuck is training all these guys? Michael Strider looks a bit older though, and he's the fuckin' man. All these guys have a goofy gimmick they're portraying, but haven't embraced fully yet, probably because they're young wrestlers, and you can't sell your bullshit to the mark-ass fans until you trick yourself into being able to believe it once you go through the curtains. Strider believes it - this personality oozes from him. He is a technically proficient shithhead of a human being. And I'm trying to think - do I enjoy this tourney so much because it's some obscure bullshit that I've never heard of any of the guys? Or is it because it's good? Well, I'd say it's pretty good, but I wouldn't go looking for the shit all over for it, because it still lacks that veteran crispiness, maybe partially because there's no substantial crowd for these guys to work for yet. But I could see, in a few years, a couple of these guys with Strider as their visible leader making an indy impact, which would then they would have to hope for their indy impact to make a Japan invite impact or a WWE developmental impact, which, if they were really good and really lucky and really unruined by shitty gimmicks written by shitty writers in the WWE should they get that one chance, then they might make an impact on the wrestling. Years from now. I tell you all that because it always makes me happy to see something - I mean this is Central States Wrestling who runs show almost exclusively in Lawrence, Kansas - where guys are still willing to bust their ass for the wrestling. Not for glory and fame, by any amazing standard, because I bet if Michael Strider rolls into an east Kansas Taco Bell for lunch on a Thursday afternoon, there aren't geeky teenagers bugging him for autographs. But in that little microcosm of the promotion, with, at best, twenty die-hard fans, and hopefully a hundred or so folks who'll come if they remember because they enjoy it enough to do so, Michael Strider is THE Michael Strider. That's one reason the professional wrestling is so beautiful. It is up to the Michael Striders and Beau James and Preston Quinns of the World if they want to commit to more than that or not. But I can appreciate them either way. And whether Michael Strider's biggest moment of his life is wrestling Raven in the Armory in Lawrence, with the big mural of the tank with a pitbull face on it, or him wrestling a dark match for the WWE in Allen Fieldhouse, or him semi-main eventing Shitty WWE PPVs #112-117 as Intercontinental champion, it doesn't matter. Because being his little asshole self in some small-time promotion on a Saturday night

for twenty-seven people is wrestling perfection. He takes the technical ability of all these other kids in this tournament, but throws in a little of manufactured emotion, which is just as important.

McNeil went for his Super Flying Monkey Karate Deathcart or whatever, but Strider shifted weight to make them fall to the mat with Strider on top, for the three-count.

Mark Sterling vs. Darrien Sanders: Steve Girthy's 40 of OE from the last match is now replaced with a half-empty 40 of Mickey's. I do so enjoy the casual goofiness of Darrien Sanders. He does the whole exaggerated hand-shake thing with Sterling, and is a respectful enough athlete, though accompanied by a drunken fat man, to earn it. But instead of any kicks or punches, he turns shaking hands, then pokes a thumb in Sterling's eyes. All these guys do a lot of crazy variations and counters, it's like Nova invented this place. And Sanders is bringing the kicks. Sterling is SOOO vanilla though, and his finisher, or at least a move he teased, is a tornado DDT. I guess out there they love plain Jane whiteboys, and can relate to both tornadoes and DDT. But Sterling wins with a Kryptonite Krunch, furthering the Nova conspiracy.

Mark Sterling vs. Michael Strider: From watching all these dudes, this is the perfect match-up for Kansas mindframe, as the simple everyday Mark guy goes up against the cockish heel. Sterling and Strider lurk in the souls of all forty-seven in attendance, but all forty-seven in attendance can't cultivate either Sterling or Strider fully in themselves. But the problem with a grapple-heavy style of wrestling promotion is the crowd gets bored; and true enough, they're all sitting there silently in this big tourney finale. Strider attempts to inject some personality into this by getting all vicious with Sterling, even breaking a megaphone over his head, which gives us our first blood of the entire evening. Now Sterling is finally pissed and pummeling Strider, because we hadn't had any ultra-violence all night, so it fires things up when it happens. This is so fuckin' old school but mixed with new school moves, it's like the New Breed were commissioned by President Dusty Rhodes to take a spaceship of pure human wrestlers (no cyborgs or cybertronics) back to 1984 for an NWA Junior Heavyweight title tourney, except Strider and Sterling has gotten more exciting (even though the crowd is still dead) than any Denny Brown vs. Gary Royal match I remember watching. Strider misses a dive into the corner, doing the old shoulder into the ringpost thing, but Sterling climbs over him and slaps on a Boston Crab, pinching Strider's shoulder, which the commentator explains was hurt last month against Colt Cabana, into the the turnbuckle - far deeper than I would've expected, and plus it looked cool.

All sorts of things happen and this is easily the best match of this tourney, and this tourney is easily motherfuckin' awesome, even if the mayor of Druggachusetts isn't here tonight to deem it so. Mark Sterling ends up winning with a tombstone piledriver.

Great tournament. Great motherfuckin' tournament. With the exception of Krow, nobody sucked, and most everybody else was far better than you'd preconceive upon first sight. This was wrestling for smarts, but steeped at least partially in old school flavors. I dug the fuck out of it.

~+~

SNAPSHOTS OF PUERTO RICO, 1988

[BY AG]

BOBBY JAGGERS V INVADER #1 [AG]: We're not in Kansas, despite what Bobby Jagers' trunks might say. I thought, incidentally, that the Kansas state bird was the Jayhawk; au contraire, is the rear chinlock, if this match is any indication. Mailed in. Jagers has a rep as a solid hand, and yeah, nothing here is overtly fucked up. But then you just see these people sitting in this damned chinlock, not even working the hold, and you ask yourself why you're watching Jagers show why he's now an insurance claim adjuster. If you have never seen Jagers before and want to know what caused all that, such as it was, you'll be better off starting elsewhere. On the positive tip, though, this had something like spirited brawling, tame by contemporary standards, toward the end of this Fall 1988 WWC/PR popcorn match.

CARLOS COLON [C] V HERCULES AYALA: If you like unrealistic brawling, Mark Youngblood outside the ring doing those stupid-ass Kin Corn Karn chops, a match layout/psychology that is only a tetch worse than two sloooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooow kids playing NES Pro Wrestling, and the highpoint of the whole affair being Colon dropping his strap or doing a cartwheel, by golly this is for you.

RICKY SANTANA V EL SOLTANO: Deep armdrags -- we'll need about twenty. An armbar, or two -- whatever it takes. A frog splashy thing Santana never quite got to do on Florida TV -- that had better be here or else. Good thing all of this got in. I feel a bit herky-jerky as I type this -- outside my window, the domestic violence olympics have started, a cokehead and his strawfrau with more passion and likely workrate than anything these two would muster. People yelling at each other because their lives are miserable really harshes my mellow. That said, I like Ricky Santana well enough -- he was a Florida mainstay back when Florida wrestling ceased to matter, and as such retains a nostalgic value even if this match really wasn't much to look at.

YOUNGBLOODZ VS MR. POGO & KENDO NAGASAKI: For belts, outside at Bayamon stadium. This was more overbooked than Heritage USA timeshares, but had its moments. The "Ninja Express" doubleteams were very nice, fluid, almost top drawer heel work with psychology kind of like Ole and Gene Anderson. The Injuns pulled out every 80s face team cliché imaginable. Some decent brawling on the diamond, though nothing that would stand out beyond the novelty value of watching them brawl on the diamond. It's hard not to cheer for the Japanese here, even as we wonder if the teams could've better settled their differences by earnest negotiation as members of oppressed groups, instead of resorting to the tawdry spectacles of hi-karate and kendo sticks. I don't think Willy Brandt would've enjoyed this. Willie B Hurt might have. Willy Loman? Sure. Neil Lomax? He was a star in the NFL, not some dreadlocked ne'er do well reviewing wrestling tapes when he should be focusing on the ass-end of his misspent life, wondering what's in worse shape -- his dental work or his stock portfolio. The kids might be alright, but goddamned if my Yukos stock ever will be again.

TO BE CONTINUED?

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TKO 17-September 2004

[Blockhead Dan Herman]

TKO is probably the top B-level promotion in North America right now. Let me make something clear. I don't use B-level as an insult. Right now the UFC, Pride when it wants to be, and whatever K-1 is calling it's MMA division when it has its act together are the only A level promotions in the world. The A level guys have to come from somewhere. Right now, a lot of them are coming from TKO. Guys like Cote, Menjivar and St. Pierre all came through TKO. To start off we get a rap metal battle about TKO, which makes me miss the dulcet sounds of Lisp Cornbread or whatever. I never thought that I'd talk about bad rap metal, but it's not a redundancy folks. I like the slower pacing on the clips, but we don't need the whole damn song.

Elbows and knees are both allowed in TKO, but soccer kicks are not. I can live with that.

Ryan Diaz v. Thierry Quenneville- 145: Already I'm rooting for a quick Diaz KO so I don't have to spell the other guy's name again. Diaz warns his opponent that "when you play with a Lion, you better be ready to go to sleep." Promos, I take it, are not his strong point. Q's nickname is Le Churnigen, so it's not like I can use that either. Q's hyped as a wrestler and sub guy, while Diaz is an all-rounder. I like Q because he says he feels a few holes and that he'll tire Diaz down in the first, beat him later on. That's the kind of trash talking that only I like.

Some feeling out to start with Q showing some active footwork, but Diaz clinches and bulls him into the corner, getting a trip for half-guard. There's just some struggling for position, but Q goes for an achilles tendon hold and winds up in Diaz's sidemount instead. For a wrestler and submissions guy, Q isn't looking good as Diaz easily takes mount and is given back mount. That's right, this is strategy. Q is just tiring Diaz out. Diaz comes close to the RNC, but never sinks it in. When he switches to striking can't get anything solid in. After not quite a minute of that, Q escapes. Q is looking a little worse for wear as they exchange standup before Diaz takes him down with a bodylock and trip. It's to no avail, as Diaz can't hold sidemount and they're back on their feet in short order. Repeat those last two sentences and the round ends. Easily Diaz's round, but this must be the plan of the crafty French Canadian.

Q is a little more aggressive to start round two and manages to control the clinch, but drops down into Diaz's side mount. He must be extending his game plan. Q rolls out, but Diaz rolls with him and gets a headscissors. He torques in Q's left arm in a triangle choke variant and hold's Q's left. Is it a choke? Is it an armbar? Mr. Niebla looks confused. They only show the sub from one angle and that makes me sad. This is obviously part of Q's strategy, luring Diaz into a false sense of security and he'll beat him in short order in the rematch. Yeah, that's it.

Sam Stout v. Steve Claveau- 155: Stout is a hard hitter who's a good anti-grappler. Claveau, a submissions guy, is a lot more cocky than the last French Canadian. There is something endearing about the way the ring announcer pronounces "corner". I dunno, maybe it's just me.

Stout sends out some jabs to start, but Claveau ducks right in for a single-leg and gets side control. MMA 101. Claveau slicks his way into mount and Stout holds on as best he can,

praying for a stand-up. Claveau breaks his grip a few times, but lands nothing of consequence. Stout tries to roll out, but Claveau goes for an arm-bar. It looks sunk, but looks are deceiving. Damn, that was fun. Stout backs away, so Claveau gets up and takes him right back down. That'll teach you to back away instead of fighting! Yeah! Claveau doesn't get mount as easily and as soon as he does, Stout rolls him over. It almost looks as if Stout is figuring out Claveau's moves. The last shoot took longer to succeed. This mount pass was countered. Claveau is defensive with Stout in his guard. Stout doesn't land anything to start, but as soon as he gets a solid elbow in, they come in a rush. Stout, TKO.

Stout looked powerful and adaptable, but Claveau still was having too easy a time with him for me to really be impressed.

Fabio Holanda v. Kultar Gill- 155: It's BJJ v. Muay Thai. Grappler v. Striker. South America v. South Asia! During the promo reels, Gill's pose of choice is to go from a profile to staring at the screen intently. The Michael Myers school of intimidation. Gill drops the F bomb, but I believe him. Holanda, meanwhile, is looking for that elusive first win.

Holanda gets a low shoot and just spiders all over Gill. He even pulls Gill out of the ropes when Gill slides under them for protection and reprieve. They roll around and Holanada always has a death grip on one of Gill's limbs. He gets an arm-lock, but the ref stands them up. Wow, that's bullshit. I thought rope breaks in MMA went out with beer bellies. Holanda goes for the ankle pick again, but Gill reverses it and Gill goes for a takedown. Bigger balls than brains. Gill almost has back control, but Holanda has the arm. Gill can't reach the ropes for this Kimura.

Gill was the number one contender at 155, but Holanda controlled this match. Some fun grappling. I want to see more of Holanda. His previous losses were to Jay Hieron and Drew Fickett, both well respected fighters with winning records. Gill, meanwhile, has a winning record, but not an impressive one. These two were more evenly matched than record alone would show.

Stephane Vigneault v. Stephane Laliberte- 145: This is a grudge match. No, I'm not trying to make a clever joke about both being named Stephane. Laliberte won a previous matchup of the Stephanes. Vingenault goes by Simba, his brother goes by Couer de Lion. Laliberte comes out to The Lion King wearing a lion suit and he's now my favorite guy ever (tonight).

The feeling out is fast, sloppy and doesn't connect. They struggle in a clinch, and Laliberte gets the takedown. Vigneault has guard and works for a few armbars, but gets none. He manages to push Laliberte over, but Laliberte gets him in a guillotine, heralding back to their previous fight. It's from Laliberte's back in Vigneault's side mount, though, so it's more for show than anything else. Laliberte gets half-guard, but that's about it. Vigneault grinds away mainly wearing Laliberte down. Laliberte manages to push Vigneault off towards the end of the round, but Vigneault just gets up and mounts him to end the round looking even better.

Round two starts with an extended feeling out process. Vigneault throws heavy hands that are seen a mile away and blocked. Laliberte throws leg kicks. Neither man controlling. Laliberte looks more fatigued, but Vigneault's failure to capitalize on his momentum belies any advantage. Vigneault is getting the better, but he's not getting the good, if that makes sense. After much plodding, Vigneault throws a spinning back fist which gets the KO. The announcers say it was timed perfectly. I don't know if I agree with that assessment. Vigneault definitely dominated this match, but I'd hardly say he looked good.

Joey Brown v. Jonathon Goulet- 170: Brown is going up in weight, which is the only thing of note from the pre-fight. Goulet throws a kick which gets blocked, but uses his reach to get a kick and deliver a knee, which is the only thing of note from the fight. It is the fight in fact.

Curtis Stout v. David Loiseau- 185: Curtis Stout was very impressive in the thirty seconds or so I've seen of him. Loiseau has settled into the roll of middleweight gatekeeper for the UFC where he's never impressed me, but this is at a lower level where he might. This basically should be a match-up between the fast and furious striking of David Loiseau against the powerful and precise strikes of Curtis Stout. Loiseau's TKO championship does not seem to be on the line.

Stout is more aggressive in the stand-up, and Loiseau decides to take him down. He can't hold him there. On his way up, Stout delivers a jumping right knee while Loiseau has his left trapped. Pretty, but not much else, really. Still, I can appreciate pretty. Stout is still the aggressor on their feet. They clinch up and struggle for the takedown. Stout starts, but Loiseau carries through for a beautiful reversal and gets side mount. Loiseau goes for an armlock, but has nothing. Loiseau maintains position well, peppering but not effectively, which is more a testament to Stout's defense than Loiseau's activity. Loiseau gets the mount and Stout immediately turns over and turtles. Again, Loiseau is active and lands some strikes, but Stout manages to take something off of them before they do and ends up back in Loiseau's side mount which is where they more or less finish the round.

Stout is not as aggressive in the second round and Loiseau is waiting for his shot. After two minutes, Stout makes a push and Loiseau takes him down for his effort. Stout has guard and he uses it very well, at least defensively speaking. He moves well, but doesn't really make more than a couple of sub attempts that may be more to keep Loiseau thinking than anything else. Stout gets back up, but Loiseau takes him right back down.

Now I want to try to explain why the last round was exciting (well, interesting) while the round in Laliberte/Vigneault where Vigneault was grinding away was not. What you had in the fight I'm in the middle of was something where you could see strategy not just being used, but formulated. Stout was on defense, but his methods shifted. He kept Loiseau busy and made him work for everything (except the takedowns, anyway). Loiseau scored little damage because Stout kept shifting his defense making it hard. Meanwhile, in the earlier fight, Laliberte pretty much hung on while Vigneault struck away at the same spot. He wasn't getting much of anything, but he wasn't trying anything else. Laliberte was defending, but his defense was static and in no way was going to lead even to him standing up until Vigneault made a mistake. That's the difference.

Laliberte was waiting, Stout was making. So even though this fight is one sided, it's a good fight. The earlier fight was one sided, but wholly uninteresting. The only caveat is that, to the untrained eye, the earlier fight is going to look more exciting because Vigneault is throwing strikes away despite them meaning little.

And since I'm digressing: I usually hate the way some smaller promotions will put leering cameras on the ring girls, but TKO may not do it enough. The difference is that the ring girls here don't look skanky or plastic. Plus, for the most part they have full curves: bust, waist and HIPS. Not the thin hipped, no ass look preferred by closet pedophiles worldwide. I hate the way "curvy" and "voluptuous" have been co-opted to mean "chubby". These women are curvy, voluptuous and are in shape. Women who look like women should spend more time on my screen.

Now the last paragraph was a matter of taste. The one before that was not. It's a lesson. Read it and learn. The more you know about MMA, the better it is.

More feeling out to start round three. Stout is throwing big, but isn't in danger of hitting Loiseau. Loiseau is making Stout come to him, knowing that he only has to worry about that dreaded puncher's chance. The crowd turns after two and a half minutes, understandably so. The stand-up hasn't lived up to its promises. Curtis stout showboats to bring in the crowd and, perhaps, get Loiseau off his guard. There's a minute left and he needs a KO, so why not? I won't try to tell you that this was an exciting or interesting round. Loiseau knew he had it, so he waited it out. Stout knew he needed a KO, didn't want to be taken down, and couldn't get past Loiseau's guard, so he only threw big. He might have even won this round, but Loiseau won the decision.

On the feet, things were too even. On the ground, Loiseau was superior. Stout had enough for an active defense, but ultimately it was too uphill for him. This wasn't a barn-burner. This was a solid two rounds of unmatched fighters (and a smartly played third round best forgotten).

Shane Rice v. Mark Hominick (champion)- 145 for the belt: This is striker versus grappler, which will probably be more pronounced a difference than what you'll normally see in a striker versus grappler match in the UFC nowadays.

The first leg kick thrown by Hominick gets trapped and he goes to his back. Rice looks to pass into an arm-bar, but doesn't have it, but settles for back control. What's better than back control? How about a rear naked choke? That was quick. All night, the other 145 guys were calling Hominick out and Rice just made short work of him, which only makes Rice seem more impressive. Nothing fancy. This was the submissions equivalent of, say, the Brown/Goulet match.

David Goulet v. Donald Ouimet (champion)- 155 for the belt: This is a rematch. Ouimet won their previous fight, and the belt, via a ref stop when he had Goulet in a choke. Goulet claimed he

wasn't out. Both of them claim they were dominating the fight beforehand. After the match, a pull-apart brawl broke out and the feud must continue.

They feel each other out to start, but Goulet manages to get a strong shove on Ouimet while backing up and recovers in time to pounce on him. The ground work to start looks more like a barfight or a catfight than an MMA fight and Ouimet ends up in Goulet's guard. Goulet tries to hold on and wait for a standup. This after saying Ouimet didn't want to fight last time. Refusing to fight on the ground is more chicken than looking for a takedown. This isn't K-1. Ouimet gets out and Goulet gets up quickly. Ouimet lands some solid body jabs while Goulet just throws sloppy, but it's basically more feeling out. Goulet backs Ouimet into the ropes and here he's able to land some shots. They jar Ouimet, but don't rock him, and Goulet is swinging for a KO. It's a short advantage and they go back to more feeling out. Ouimet is landing some good shots, but not following through. Goulet rushes in, but Ouimet scores more backing up than Goulet does rushing in. Near the end of the round, Goulet charges in and Ouimet scores. This time he follows through with a flurry and Goulet tries a desperation takedown and ends up in Ouimet's side control right as the bell comes. Good boxing is beating sloppy boxing thus far.

Goulet's heart seems to be gone in round two. Where he was pressing the action before, he's penned in the ropes now. Ouimet doesn't pounce, but he's in control. One beautiful left hook from Ouimet on the button sends Goulet flopping to the mat and the ref calling for the bell. Goulet was outmatched here, but it was exciting nonetheless.

Overall: This card was low on the starpower for TKO, but it was a solid card. Nothing truly horrible. The Loiseau/Stout match isn't for everyone. The rest of the matches are well booked b-guys and as I've said before, there's nothing wrong with having a card full of b-guys, so long as they're booked in matches that bring out their best. I think that happened here. There's nothing worth going out of your way for, though, and I'm sure that there's better TKO cards than this. This was still a good night of fights.

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Fighting Ultimate Crazy Kings Sweet Salt Shock Unbelievable Tag Team Tournament-
5/29/2005

[RAVEN MACK]

(BEER ONE) Taking it back to the old school 12-pack review, where instead of forcing myself to drink an actual 12-pack, I'll just drink as much as this tape encourages me to. It is midnight, I've already had a couple, and tomorrow morning will come far too quick. Today, with heat index, it was 105 degrees. Tomorrow will be 110. We are painting a two-story brick place, outside of course, and the old fucks have a pool in the backyard, rich fucks. The woman just idles about in a floating chair all afternoon, every afternoon, reading shitty books. Once in a while, she falls off and swims back and forth a couple of laps, and the sound of one solitary woman splashing through water in freestyle strokes, while I'm on top of a 32-foot ladder hoping the hornets on the gutter nail don't swoop in too close and sting my stupid ass, and the humidity fills my mind with anger and class resentment. And then the daughter-in-law comes over, slips down to her bikini,

and as I scrape the excess paint off the window panes of the upstairs bathroom, I can see a reflection in the right panes of the pool, and the daughter-in-law draped up the steps of the pool, reading her own shitty novel, showing her ass almost completely with no back beyond a string to her top, and like Mrs. Parker in Friday, she knows what she's doing. Fucking slut, distracting me from my shitty life.

So yeah, hopefully this FUCK nonsense will distract me from my shitty life, and hopefully I won't be drinking Milwaukee's Best Light until four in the morning so that tomorrow, beyond the 110 heat index, I won't be sweating beer processings from my liver through my pores all day long, giving my sweat that weird smell of not wearing deodorant, even though I cake slices of it on in the summertime.

My man Shirley Doe told me this Fighting Ultimate Crazy Kings is pure wrestling sleaze, and what is better for a degenerate alcoholic housepainter to watch around midnight on a Monday night than that to keep his mind and internet browser off of the Ass Parade? Nothing, that's what.

Show looks to be in a garage with twelve people in attendance. Perfect. Sleazy wrestling is only allowed to fully explore it's sleaziness when folks don't know about it yet. Once they know, the sleaze is no longer developed anymore, and instead the promotion simply tries to recreate successful sleaze of the past. Think ECW on TNN. From the look of the entrants, I can already see this is going to be a great tape. Necro Butcher and Mad Man Pondo are versus everybody at first, but then everybody starts fighting, crazy masked guys, all sorts of shit. Pondo and Butcher clear the ring, and Pondo jumps up to the top rope and says something in Japanese, and then Necro goofs off. There are seriously six people in attendance, because the two girls cleared out after the opening brouhaha.

Osamu Suganuma & Ultraman Robin vs. Mad Man Pondo & Necro Butcher: (BEER TWO)
There's this regular looking Jap dude named Osamu Suganuma, and this red masked alien motherfucker named Ultraman Robin. They are doomed to face Necro Butcher and Mad Man Pondo. The ref comes to check Necro, and Necro pushes him away, yelling, "Get the fuck off me motherfucker!" It is extra fuckin' funny to imagine none of these people really speak English, which makes Necro even scarier to them. Absolutely hilarious. Ultraman Robin and Pondo start, and this young short Ultraman has spent far more on ring attire than training so far, as he "nails" the absolute worst DDT I've ever seen. Suganuma and Butcher get in the ring, and the young kid begs for Necro and him to trade chops. Then it turns into a training session, as Necro stiffs him with a forearm, then sticks his own cheek out and smacks it, and they repeat. Then they beat the shit out of Suganuma who ends up with those red hand prints on his chest that smart marks think makes a match great. Very amusing match as Necro seems as drunk as Dave Attell, but these two Japanese kids get thrown to them. Pondo yells out, "WHO'S GONNA BEAT US?" to all nine people in the crowd, as the scared girls are back inside the garage door again.

This tape shows Pondo and Necro and their beautiful Japanese Woman second posing for pictures backstage (outside) after the match, and Necro makes Pondo switch sides so he can show off his new pot leaf tattoo.

The Zack/ Psycho Circus Ultimate Marvelous vs. Great Ninja/ Kenji Fukimoto: The Zack is a The Rock fan, and Ninja and Fukimoto come out to "Danger Zone" by Kenny Loggins, which puts them nine steps closer to my redneck upbringing than the other guys. Every time I take my own kids to the county fair, and we walk by the big kids rides, and I see that ferris wheel with the caged carriers that you can lock the bar on to make them go upside down, and you see some redneck thug winning a 2pac mirror for his main girl, and "Danger Zone" is inevitably playing at some sort of ride, it makes me proud of who I am. Great Ninja wears camo pants and a glittery King Tut crossed with ninja style mask. This match lacks slow-moving aliens or fighting boxes, and the Ninja keeps adjusting his mask, and The Zack is a goof, and hopefully that dinging in the audience is not somebody's fancy electronic gizmo I don't even know about yet, but a timer suggesting "End this match" to the combatants. Although I do enjoy the fact Fukimoto makes one of the six people sitting there get up so he can use the chair to whip up on The Zack ringside. Ninja hits a contrived lucha submission, gets the quittance, adjust his mask, and "Danger Zone" plays out the P.A. again.

Oh, sweet, I get it. Fukimoto wears a shirt called Danger Zone Wrestling. He must be Mitsuhiro Matsunaga's brother's step-child.

The Crypt Keeper/ Super Alien Murderer Yapool vs. Zenji Shanghai/ Mammoth Handa: As awesome as you may think a Crypt Keeper and Super Alien Murderer are, they are not. They look like teenagers trick-or-treating, when they should be grown enough to give up on that bullshit and use the evil holiday to do acid and listen to The Geto Boys in a dark room with a gothic Mexican chick. (BEER THREE) I actually enjoy this Crypt Keeper/Super Alien Murderer combo, as I've lowered my bar here...this is not to be viewed as wrestling, but as the Japanese equivalent of backyarders five years removed from trampoline wrestling who are all enrolled in art school together. And this is far better, execution-wise, than what I'd get at an underground party in Richmond or Austin or Chapel Hill when it comes to goofy masked characters and unmasked stereotypes doing the fake combat in the theater of the professional wrestling. The Crypt Keeper's entire outfit points towards his heart chakra, suggesting he is pure and clean of hurt. His affirmation is, "I am open to give and receive love, freely and effortlessly. I forgive and release the pains of my past, and I am free to love in the present." He attacks Mammoth Handa ringside because Handa, in baseball jersey, is visibly attached the tricked out numerology of the baseball nerd, which is heavily intertwined with all the pains of the past, so much so the present becomes painful. Look at the Red Sox before last year, or the Cubs to this day. Success doesn't mean success; it means further prolonging of the inevitable failure. A botched tag team maneuver leads to The Crypt Keeper and Super Alien Murderer Yapool beating down each other, giving Handa and Shanghai the cheap first-round victory.

Post-match Super Alien Murderer Yapool and The Crypt Keeper opposing promos not using actual human language to describe their newly-discovered hatred for each other - it's great shit. If we could have a foreign exchange for late Saturday night public access shows, where weird American shit went to other countries and we got something in return, I imagine I just watched five minutes of that. Again, it was awesome.

Perseus Jr. & Ultraman Robin vs. MASADA & Euing Sammy: Perseus comes out solo, so Ultraman Robin's little midget power ranger ass comes out to help fill the ranks, and MASADA looks gigantic in this little industrial garage. This is the southern Texas/NWA Wildside/metalhead MASADA, not the Japanese one, who I guess is Japanese-American actually, so the non-Japanese MASADA is fighting in Japan. You know stupid American indy matches will have nineteen counters then the two dudes face off at a stalemate and everybody claps? Ultraman hit a hiptoss headlock on Euing Sammy, then Sammy put a headscissors on him to escape, then Ultraman jumped out the headscissors and they both ended up with their hands clenched like kung fu grip G.I. Joes, and one dude clapped. Masada and Ultraman actually bring a bit of actual quality wrestling, even though visually it looks like Keanu Reeves beating up on his little brother in a Power Rangers costume in a deleted scene from River's Edge. I zoned out for a minute, but now Perseus the Junior and Euing Sammy are trying to be luchafied as well as German suplex each other on spinal columns. MASADA looks like Bruiser Brody in there with these guys. Perseus gets Death Valley Drivered onto the hair sticking out of his Hayabusa-style mask, and the first round of this INCREDIBLE SWEET SALT TOURNAMENT or whatever is over.

(BEER FOUR) Post-match interview with MASADA being the odd man out in the stoned gaijin department, saying "Fuck Pondo, Fuck Necro Butcher," and his little anonymous masked partner saying, "Thank you" over and over, public access perfection, but on wrestling tape form. I hope by the end of this tape I see a woman wearing fairy wings fuck a zombie from behind, but it's softcore so all you see is the fairy wings chicks big tits bouncing from thrusts rather than being thrust upon. See? That little switch of dominant position is what makes it artistic.

Necro Butcher/ Mad Man Pondo vs. Zenji Shanghai/ Mammoth Handa: Necro talking shit is better than the match. He cajoles Pondo to punch the kung fu Shanghai dude in the face, then calls the guy Bruce LeRoy, and when Pondo pokes Shanghai in the eye and kicks him in the nuts, Necro hollers, "SHONUFF!"

Mammoth Handa botches a baseball slide. Necro falls over anyways, but then is up and throwing shit everywhere. This is a small place and nobody really seems comfortable with this big (by the crowd's standards) bearded hillbilly with a pot-leaf tattoo throwing everything everywhere. Pondo smashes the Handa kid with his stop sign, but the kid kicks out at two, and Pondo says, "Oh...now you fucked up." Necro digs at Handa's eyeball to throw on the floor and stomp onto a fluorescent light tube, but it won't come out that way, so he starts digging up his nose for the other end of the eye socket to pull out from there and toss into some rubbing alcohol.

Wait, now we're actually all of a sudden in a training session with Necro Butcher and MASADA showing a bunch of small Japanese dudes how to be wrestlers. Strange, and then back to the match just in time to see Handa botch a sunset flip. Yep, a sunset flip. Other things happened, but I started reading the new issue of Penthouse Forum Letters. Does everybody in the World but me like to hide in the closet and watch their wife fuck three other guys? I don't get it. They should put out a Penthouse Forum Retro magazine so that I can read literary porn that jibes with my personal perversions.

Post-match interviews and the Japanese kids are giggling and holding their foreheads, all stoked to have gotten beat up by Mad Man Pondo and The Necro Butcher.

Great Ninja/ Kenji Fukimoto vs. MASADA/ Euing Sammy: Fuck, the match started and I stopped paying attention immediately, and somehow the Great Ninja was unmasked outside and he's got giant curly Giant Silva hair but he's Oriental (ethnicity not luchador), and he's slamming Euing Sammy's head into a stack of tires in the alley. Back inside, Sammy hits the most homemade speed-spastic elbowdrop into figure-four I've ever seen, far more insane than Buddy Landell's. Great Ninja lands about four fistdrop about nine inches above Euing Sammy's head. Ninja has weird scars and longhair, so I imagine his team is most inclined to face off against the death match kings in the tourney finals. They wouldn't have three of the four be Americans. Even if this is an industrial center garage, they've still got pride. Yukio Mishima didn't die for nothing I hope.

Retarded move of the night: Ninja is set up in a chair ringside and MASADA comes running to do a diving senton from the ring, and it's great because the Ninja dude doesn't move at all from his head-slung-low position, so MASADA lands on the dude's neck and then crushes his own spine on a couple of chairs. Them dudes with the Kenny Loggins music win. It's heard to believe someone who made something as contrived and shitty as "Danger Zone" could be the same guy who teamed with Jim Messina to make some awesomely Sunday morning mellow goodness. "Danny's Song"? "House at Pooh Corner"? "Vahevala"? Good stuff.

I would like to skip the non-tourney matches, but Cutie Commando is a chick with large breasts and gold go-go shorts and a black mask with cat ears, so I like her enough to...oh, the match ended while I wrote that. I think it was supposed to be a two-count, because she complained about her own win, counting for the ref, but that's that. I could imagine her and me lounging around the house on a Sunday morning, side 4 of Loggins & Messina On Stage record playing just loud enough, her just wearing an apron with nothing underneath but it's one of those old-fashioned aprons, so when she walks towards me when I finally come down to the kitchen, her breasts are almost but not quite visible, but I can see there's nothing underneath, and when she walks back across the room to put the frying pan back on the stove, nothing but ass, all while still wearing her wrestling mask because she's old school and afraid somebody might come to the door and figure out who she is.

There's another match for some sort of intergender belt, but I could really care less.

Great Ninja/ Kenji Fukimoto vs. Mad Man Pondo/ Necro Butcher: They've got light tubes along two sides of the ring this time, so this will probably be stupid. Necro tries to explain to the other dudes to take their shirt off, asking to ears that don't understand but idolize, "Are you a man or a woman?" Basically, the Americans brutalize the Japanese, but Fukimoto does suplex Necro outside the garage off a ledge onto asphalt. (BEER FIVE) Pondo carves a dude with a blade, then has a staple gun and a cloth sack, and asks for cheers from the nine people hiding outside the garage in the rain, and two of them cheer, so Pondo staples a sack to Fukimoto's head.

Then a bunch of nonsense that dragged on, and finally I heard a closing bell and Pondo and Butcher had won, but I was already looking at Ass Parade.

And to think I actually picked this out of a list of crap to want to watch. Fighting Ultimate Crazy Kings needs more substance to its sleaze. Being acronymed FUCK might trick a few goofballs into checking you out, but unless you can deliver something worthy of that trick, they'll never come back. Where the hell is Survival Tobita to shape these kids up?

Man, it's like backyarders hiring Pondo and Necro, and afterwards, the two losers of the final, all bludgeoned, get into a car with weird DVD guidance screen, and go to the hospital or doctor's office to get patched up, and they make a big deal about all of this on the tape. It's fucking stupid. Never ever in your life get a FUCK tape, unless it's an actual fuck tape where humans have sex, and even then get the older stuff because the newer stuff is twisted and not meant to satisfyingly stimulate you so much as corrupt and tweak you with strange perversions. But wrestling FUCK equals LAME.

~+~

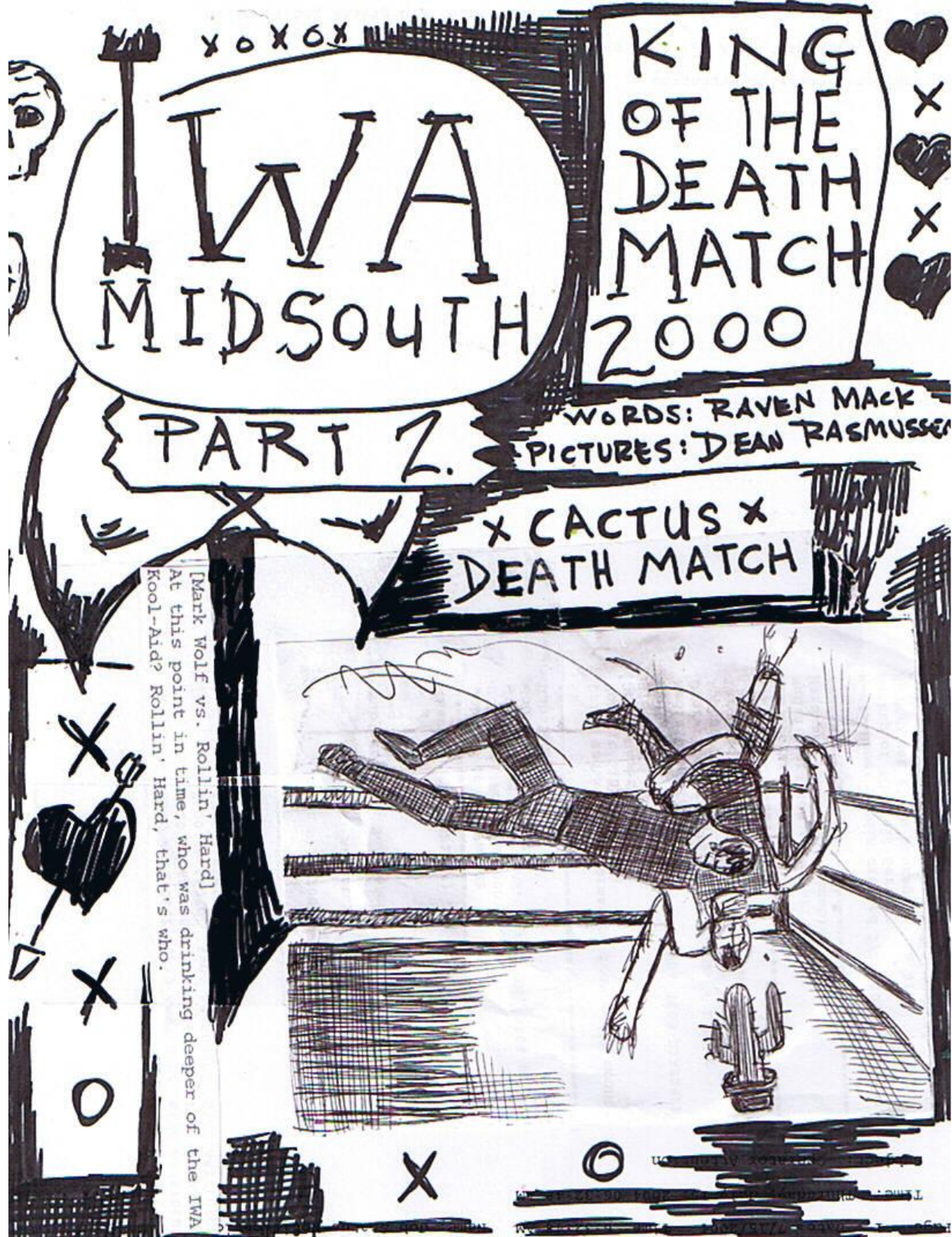
To his Coy Lordship, abridged [Recommendation To Avoid]
by Blackjack Parsoon and Marvell Andrews

Had we but boom mikes, and time,
This coyness, Lordship, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To call TV matches today;
Thou by the steel cage's side
Shouldst brass knuckles find; I by the tide
Of Hulkster would complain. I would
Love you as Hammer face first fell, a thud;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the breakup of Rhythm and Blues.
My ringside love should grow
Vaster than Yoko, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
a five star match through cigar smoke haze;
Welts upon each jobber's breast,
no ringrat, here, at your behest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lordship, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Jimmy Hart's megaphone's dreadful blear;

And yonder all before us lie
Prelim stuff booked on the fly.
Thy color shall no longer be found,
Nor, in the Titan vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserv'd Shepherd's pie,
As your kayfabled knighthood turn to dust,
And into ashes all my markish lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.-- BJP~! MA~!~!

~+~





I UNDERSTAND WRESTLING IS
THEATRICS, BUT WHY WOULD
MANSLAUGHTER VS AXL YOU
THREATEN A
← MAN WITH A CHAIN SAW THAT
LACKS A FUNCTIONING CHAIN TO
DO ANYTHING?

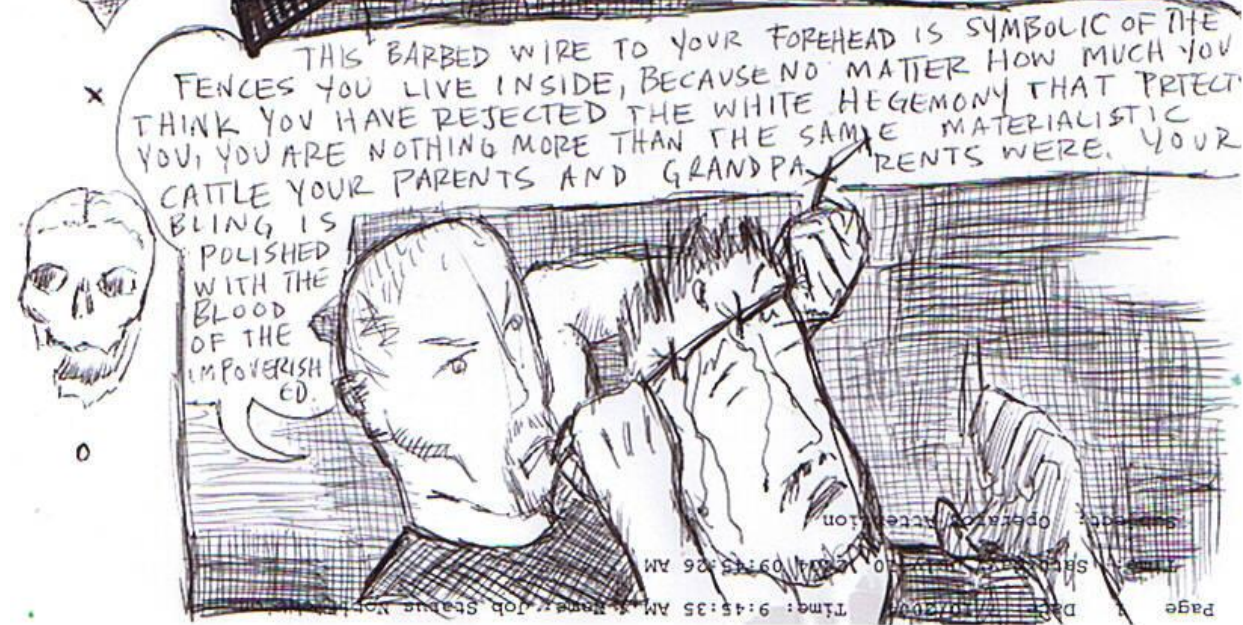
MANSLAUGHTER IS SUCH A CHEAP
SHITTY GIMMICK, BUT AXL ROTE
CAME FOR THE PARTY, NOT
TO WORK TWO DEATH MATCHES
IN ONE NIGHT, SO TEXAS
CHAINSAW GIMMICK #49 IS
A 2000 KOTDM SEMI-FINALIST

This is what I miss about IWA. I'd trade the thousand-and-a-
half lightweight classics (classic because someone almost
gets pinned a whole lot) between barely different little
dudes with names that sound like boy band members from 1998
for a few more Cash Flo and Corporal Robinson matches. Both
these guys are fun, and wrestling is supposed to be fun, at
least a little. Why else would you sit there watching grown
men engage in pseudo-combat?



CORPORAL
ROBINSON
VS
CASH FLO

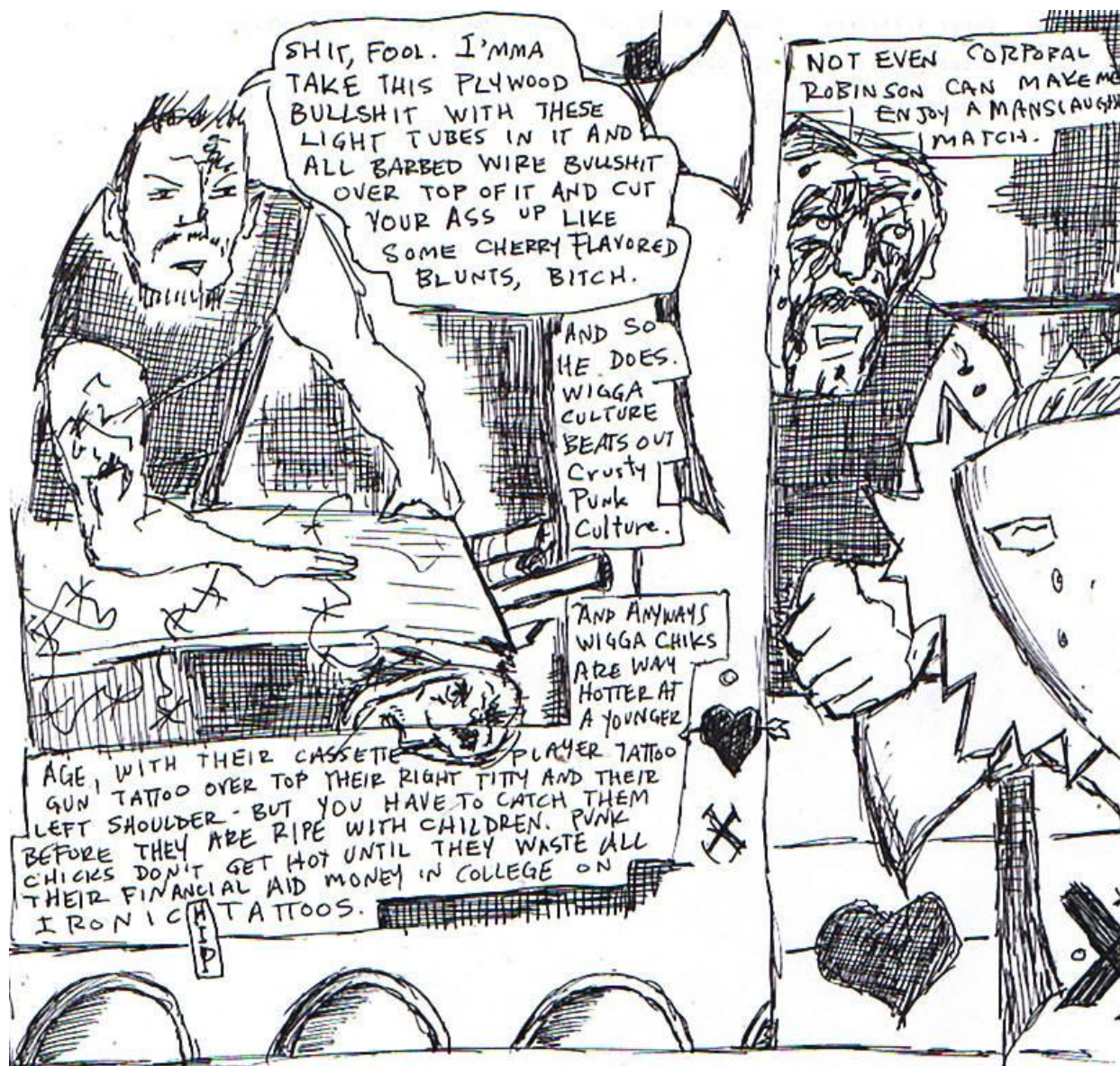
ALISIER FEAR VS ROLLIN HARD
 FEAR REPRESENTS ANARCHY, WHILE ROLLIN REPRESENTS
 WIGA CULTURE, THUS WE HAVE A BATTLE BETWEEN SUBURBAN
 AMERICA'S PRE-EMINENT TWO ANTISOCIAL SUBCULTURES, SO IT
 MUST BE A DEBATE IN PHYSICAL FORM.



SHIT, FUCK YOU FOOL. TWO MOTHERFUCKIN' REVERSE THUMB TACK WHIFFLE BALL BATS ON YOUR CHEST MOTHER FUCKER.

IMMA SHINE MY BLING WITH YOUR UNPOLISHED BLOOD, AND MAKE YOU MY SERIALISTIC CATTLE, FOOL.

I WILL
RESIST YOUR
CONCEITED PIN
ATTEMPTS AFTER THE
METHODS YOU USE TO FINISH
OFF THE MAINSTREAM DREGS
OF SOCIETY, BECAUSE
THE RESISTANCE BEATS
FROM EVERY HEART TO EVERY
SINEW OF MY BODY, BECAUSE I
WON'T FALL VICTIM TO YOUR METHODS
OF THE EUROPEAN ESTABLISHMENT YOU
REPRESENT (ALBEIT IN YOUR POST-MODERN BLACK-FACE
WAY). I WILL NOT SUCCUMB, WILL NOT STUFF
MY SOUL INTO A BUTTON-DOWNED SHIRT, AND
SIT IN A STARBUCKS SUCKING A MY
OVER PRICED
SLOW D x E x A x T x H.



SHIT, FOOL. I'MMA
TAKE THIS PLYWOOD
BULLSHIT WITH THESE
LIGHT TUBES IN IT AND
ALL BARBED WIRE BULLSHIT
OVER TOP OF IT AND CUT
YOUR ASS UP LIKE
SOME CHERRY FLAVORED
BLUNTS, BITCH.

AND SO
HE DOES.
WIGGA
CULTURE
BEATS OUT
CRUSTY
PUNK
CULTURE.

AND ANYWAYS
WIGGA CHIKS
ARE WAY
HOTTER AT
A YOUNGER

AGE, WITH THEIR CASSETTE
GUN TATTOO OVER TOP THEIR RIGHT TITTY AND THEIR
LEFT SHOULDER - BUT YOU HAVE TO CATCH THEM
BEFORE THEY ARE RIPE WITH CHILDREN. PUNK
CHICKS DON'T GET HOT UNTIL THEY WASTE ALL
THEIR FINANCIAL AID MONEY IN COLLEGE ON
IRONIC TATTOOS.

HIP

NOT EVEN CORPORAL
ROBINSON CAN MAKE ME
ENJOY A MANSLAUGHTER
MATCH.

★ ○ × ♥ × ★ × ♥ × ★ × ♥ ×

ROLLIN HARD DOES A TOPE THROUGH BARBED WIRE ROPES TO THE OUTSIDE. OTHER THAN THAT, IT'S JUST MORE CARNAGE, WHICH I'M DESENSITIZED TO BY NOW THROUGH THIS TAPE. IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU'RE DATING SOME GIRL WITH NO SELF-ESTEEM, BUT ALSO A FEW REDEEMING QUALITIES TO MAKE YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT DOING BAD THINGS TO HER, IN YOUR EARLY 20S AND YOU FEEL EXPERIMENTAL AND TALK HER INTO A GANGBANG. SURE, WATCHING THE FIRST TWO OR THREE GUYS FUCK HER IS STIMULATING, AT LEAST IN THE MINDSTATE YOU WERE IN BACK AT THAT POINT IN YOUR LIFE, BUT AFTER A WHILE YOU JUST WANT IT TO END. AND THERE ISN'T THERE ISN'T GOING TO BE ANY BIG EXCITING CLIMAX AFTER THAT MUCH INDULGENCE. IT'S GOING TO JUST EVENTUALLY END. WHICH THIS MATCH DOES, AND I'M SURE THIS IS PROBABLY A HIGHLIGHT OF ROLLIN' HARD'S LIFE-



U

HIM BEING THE 2000 KING OF THE DEATH MATCHES, WHEN HE LAYS IN THE BED AT NIGHT SOMETIMES, AND HE REFLECTS ON MOMENTS THAT MADE HIM THE PROUDEST, I'M SURE THIS - ALONG WITH THE BIRTH OF HIS FIRST BORN, WEIGHT HIGHLY IN THOSE THOUGHT STREAMS, AND THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT AT ALL. WRESTLING IS NOT JUST THERE FOR THOSE OF US WHO WATCH IT TO TRY TO TRY AND ENJOY; IT'S ALSO THERE SO THOSE WHO WANT TO INDULGE THEIR VIOLENTLY EXHIBITIONIST NATURE CAN DO SO. THAT'S FINE. BUT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US ALL GET SOME SORT OF EMOTIONAL BENEFIT FROM THE WHOLE SCENARIO, TO HAVE OUR MORAL CODES REAFFIRMED THROUGH THE VICTORIES OF THOSE WE IDENTIFY WITH OR AT LEAST BE CHALLENGED FAIRLY BY SOME FORCES THAT WE FEEL UNFAIRLY CHALLENGE US IN EVERYDAY LIFE. I MAY HAVE NEVER PUT SOMEONE IN A HOMEMADE COFFIN AND SET THEM ON FIRE LIKE ROLLIN' HAS, BUT I CAN TELL THIS GRAND FINALE HAS GIVEN ME NO SORT OF AFFIRMATION TO TAKE INTO MY EVERYDAY LIFE. IT HAS MOMENTARILY OCCUPIED, BUT NOT ENTHRALED ME, LIKE SLOWING DOWN TO LOOK AT A SMASHED CAR ON THE SIDE OF THE INTERSTATE. LUCKILY, LATER (WAMS KOTDMS SHOWED HERE AND THERE THAT DEATH MATCHES DON'T HAVE TO BE SO BORING.

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YET ANOTHER SNAPSHOT FROM MY PUERTO RICAN 1988 VACATION
[BY AG]

PUERTO RICAN BRAWL. The scene out of H. Bosch -- a ring full of bunkhousin' WWC rasslers. all of the sordid stars that didn't fit on US cable. Rufus R. Jones! Afa! Buddy Landell! Ron and Chicky Starr! I believe Porkchop Cash, Sifa, and Chic Donovan may have been there also. I have a 19" Sanyo TV from the Reagan era and it's hard for me to see such things. But every motherfucker in this match was a legit, carny motherfucker.

There was a lot of blood, sweat, tears, paying the price. Chains and Belts and two-by-fours, and blood and pricepaying and sweat. Lots of sweat. Pretty static for the first fifteen minutes; once you got past the novelty of the match, you began to notice somethings -- like my use of second person like I'm Jimmy Cannon....

Trying, again. The match proceeded apace, with bloodshed galore, but a mere scintilla of the workrate of a Paul London match. How I long to tonguebathe Paul London, like a cat curled up in the window. Purr, Precious Paul, purr. Let me pet you.
Oooh, five stars -- hardon of HONOUR! LOL18OMGLOLshootpaypal

donate....

Returning to the narrative of this match, it appears that the fracas has proceeded to crescendo. Afro-American R.R. Jones, the workingman's friend, is alone in the ring with nefarious scoundrels Ron Starr and Buddy Landell. I of course do not have to remind you that Mr. Starr is not a titan of workrate. None of his matches will be on any Top 100 -- except of depravity. Meanwhile, I shudder sadly, thinking of the dissipated potential of one Mr. Landell. If only his demons had been under control! Then -- who knows -- a road agent gig! Tsk tsk.

The ending of this was awesome. The heels bounce out, Rufus wins the battle royale, and the fans are stoked. The blackest man in the wrestling business goes over. I've always thought Rufus never got the WWF run because he was too southern and too real for it, and that's a shame as the guy had a charisma that worked best in arenas -- those Smoke Filled Halls Of Yesteryear. As I watched this match, smoke filled the hall, and I knew that all of those legit carny

motherfuckers would understand, and would probably dig the idea of having this match talked about in 2005, even though most of them probably don't even remember it.

See, wrestling once was about legitimacy. Authenticity. Even if you could see a punch pulled here or there, it felt real because the stories told were stories we could relate to. Why the hell wouldn't we? These guys were like us, or at least our dads, driving rattling cars, making money just to spend it, and finding a way to punch formulaic suburban styled regrets in the face just by being legit motherfuckers.

Very few legit motherfuckers left. There are a lot of us who see one side -- the legit side, where people live on a cash-only basis and who don't take shit from anybody to keep the lights on. But that side has its drawbacks. The thing about Puerto Rican wrestling that makes it larger than the sum of its parts is that everyone involved is on an Island of the Damned, You have to be harder than a lesbian's erection to survive. Even then, you might not -- RIP Bruiser Brody, for example. The line between work and shoot doesn't really exist here, not all the time. Even though Rufus wins, you know, at the end of this, that Rufus winning or losing isn't the story. The story of PR wrestling, ultimately, is the hustle.

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!!
Did you love me- I'd like to think so
But I was blameless
SINGLES GOING STEADY
So why did you go?
I got nothing left at all- at all- at all
!!

Toby Klein/Necro Butch vs Nick Gage/ Justice Pain- CZW- 7/11/2005- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]:
This was up on the board and everybody else got to review a Necro butcher match last DVDVR so I figured this is my week. Justice Pain I don't hate. Nick Gage not so much. Toby Klein I've only seen in the Necro Butcher match. Let's get these kids together and see if I hate it. Klein storms the ring and previous scars are opened up. NecroButcher storms the building and Kills Nick Gage with a trashcan lid and then hits Pain with it. Butcher hits the comical Rolling Senton to the floor and they take it to the stands. Gage and Butcher do a lot of walking until they make it to the bay door while Klein and Justice are suplexing each other in the parking lot. Butcher will die for your pleasure and hurls himself backfirst into the metal loading bay door. They all gather round the door and wander back into the crowd. Pain drags Butcher into the bleachers but Butcher suplexes to offense. Gage flies into the chairs and Butcher decides to pelt him with chairs. Toby Klein and Pain have a wrestling match in the ring, as Klein hits a lariat. Butcher does the INSANE unprotected bodyslam of Gage with a chair held across Gage's back. Butcher stabs him in the head with something. Klein and Pain are up on the balcony now. Pain flies through a table on the floor from the balcony while Butcher headbutts Gage in the ring. Klein climbs down and gets a two count- and it's odd how immune I am to people jumping off

balconies through tables at this point. If you aren't gonna set your shirt on fire like Winger and senton onto someone, you probably shouldn't bother with all the risk- it'll never look as good. Klein piledrives Pain on a trashcan and throws him towards the ring. Gage gives Butcher a chairshot as dangerous as the unprotected bodyslam from a few minutes ago. Gage crushes Butcher's head with the belt. Gage sets up a spot where both he and Butcher sit on chairs and punch each other in the face. Which was great because I hate ALL OTHER spots that involve you making your opponent sit in a chair. Klein is just spewing blood at this point. Pain goes face first into the ringpost but makes it back in time to double suplex Butcher to the floor off the apron. Butcher looked like he took it all wrong- but I think that's part of the allure of the NecroButcher. Klein is a mess but he drags Gage to the ring but Pain hits the ring before Klein can do anything. Pain and Gage do some nasty looking tagteam manueurs involving being brainbusted on an open chair. The Spike Piledriver seems anti-climatic. Butcher makes the save and throws Pain to the floor all crazy and weird. Butcher hits a Lyger Bomb for a two count as this gets kinda comically conventional suddenly. Butcher crushes Gages head so that he sits down in the chair- in the only other spot I could ever love where you force your opponent to sit down. Then, everybody throws chairs into the ring and- after the throwing of chairs in the arena stops- Necrobutcher DIVES ON TOP OF GAGE. Pain hits butcher with a chair and Gage catches him on the top (as they don't really get over the danger of being hit by a hundred chairs too well to the rubes) and Superplexes Butcher off the top. FOR TWO?!?! Fuck this match. They keep kicking out of everything for a while. Pain wins with a German. There ya go.

BOB BACKLUND [WWWF Chammp] V. BILLY GRAHAM- [AG]: This was a Sicilian Stretcher match from Philly, late 1978, and the crowd was split 50/50 before the match. Mindnumbing action for about ten minutes. I had to stop watching. I was falling asleep. Five minutes of what I saw was a bearhug. The other five was less memorable.

TAKUMI YANO/MASAKAZU IMANARI V. REMEGIJUS MORKEVICIUS/DARIUS STANKUS - ZST 1 (rematch)- [DAN HERMAN]: His name isn't Darius Stankus. It's Darius Stankevicius, but that didn't stop the kids in the lunchroom from calling him Stankus. Darius Stankus! Darius STANKus! He cursed life. The name followed him up from grade school. Why did he have to go to school in such a small district? One where he was one of only two Lithuanian exchange students?

His cousin Remigijus Morkevicius, or Remmy, saw the stress that young Darius was going through. Remmy was a bruiser, a slammer. He spoke with his fists firsts and then later with his feet. His mouth wasn't much good, even before he took to wearing a bite guard at all times. Remmy took Darius under his wing. "We'll show those bastards," he mumbled through the mouthpiece. "Make them curse the day they misspoke your name."

Meanwhile Yano and Imanari had no idea that they were giving poor Darius an ulcer. They had both been bullied themselves as kids, but quickly learned that nothing beats a bully better than beating him to his target. Like Cyrano de Bergerac, they made fun of themselves and did so better. They knew that Darius was going to have problems fitting in, and didn't have the sheer

intensity of his cousin to get through it, so they gave him a hand. Darius Stankus was to be a mutual defense, not an offense.

But while they honed their goof, they honed other skills as well. Knowing that one day their self-deprecating wit might fail at holding back the onslaught, they became skilled at the ground fight and had a reputation as wizards. So when the fight came, it wasn't time to explain. A reputation can only stand if it's tested. The test would come from Lithuania with no love. They had met before. They would meet again. Like four dragons, forever locked in combat over a simple misunderstanding.

Young Darius would start off against The Mysterious Yano. Yano was a student of the lesser known Chinese Philosopher Moh Tzu, and an avid student of Dogen. Immersed in the order of the Black Socks, he would advance by retreating, defeat his opponent by neutralizing him, gain through loss, fight by not fighting. From there Imanari would enter and look deep in the heart of terror known as Morkevicius. A man so filled with hate and bloodlust, he would stomp all that stood underfoot. He knew that Imanari had at least thought about calling him "Morkevicius from Orkevicius" and for that he must pay. But Imanari's game is smoke and mirrors. He slipped and slid, even seemed to teleport and before he had realized it, Morkevicius had tagged in Darius, much to their collective Lithuanian chagrin. Darius didn't need as much misdirection, no spooking into the corner, instead Imanari would stick to his leg, much like the name Stankus had stuck to him for twelve years.

The Black Sock mystery would work again; like the Mongol army, luring Darius into a false sense of victory before attacking with fury and shock at his leg. Yes, Yano and Imanari agreed: if anything about Darius Stankus, it was his ground game. But divide and conquer would only work for so long, and soon enough Imanari would be staring into the brimstone of Morkevicius again. Unlike the Black Socks, the Urban Mirror Method could show no fear. This was to the advantage of Imanari, however, since The Terror fed off of the fear of lesser men. As Morkevicius gazed across the ring at Imanari, he was perplexed. If he has no fear, I have no strength. If I have no strength, I have only fear. My fear drives my hate, my hate feeds on fear. Without his fear, I only hate myself. The Urban Mirror Technique not only dazzles, it reflects. With Morkevicius thus perplexed, he slowed and was caught.

But the fight was not over, not even the short one. The beast was quelled, but Darius still burned. "My cousin is defeated, but I will continue on with the Man in Black Socks and the Deadly Urban Mirror. I have bathed in the fire of hatred. If Darius Stankus shall be my name to the grave, then I shall carve my epitaph in the face of my enemies."

While the war will rage long, the battle did not. The Black Socks mystified and the Urban Mirror destroyed. Darius Stankivicius went down, but he went down fighting.

"We have lost today, my cousin," Morkevicius spoke through his protective biteplate, "but we gained ground. You have fought like a man. We shall bathe some more in the fire of hate. Dine on the bones of destruction. Just as the Black Socks advance through retreat, we shall go back

to our homeland. We shall study the methods of the Balkan warlords, the Soviets, the Czars and the Golden Horde. We will not stop until our enemies are stomped into the earth, and with them the name Darius Stankus."

TO BE CONTINUED

Toshiaki Kawada vs Kazushi Miyamoto- ALL JAPAN PRO WRESTLING- 7/26/2005- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: God, I haven't seen Miyamoto since Tenryu beat the living hell out of him. Actually, I guess I saw him live that time in ROH (if he was there. Booze. Age. Disinterest in AJ juniors.) A certain benevolent benefactor got a hold of this match and- since he is a TRUE SUPERSTAR- posted it. Miyamoto grew his hair out and put on some muscle. He goes all highflying on Kawada and Kawada is a man and makes it look like offense that is hurting him- sorta like when Mr Gannesuke would make you believe that Kuroda was good (DOH!)- except Miyamoto has proven that he'll take an assbeating and he brings it pretty good for a minute there. This truly is a Worldwide match, as Kawada sells for three minutes and then beats the shit out of Miyamoto for two. Quite the Flair- Brad Armstrong Full Worldwide Point. I think I would be kinda cheesed off if I spent 100 bucks for tickets and this was my main event but I didn't so I'm not so there ya go.

The Masked Superstar & Ernie Ladd vs. Ole Anderson & Stan Hansen - Georgia Championship Wrestling sometime '79/'80 or so-[RAVEN MACK] : The deal here is Ole had just turned honest, but he and Ernie Ladd were tag champs, so this match would decide the new champs with each guy picking his own new partner. I've lucked into a number of late '70s Florida and Georgia tapes lately, and it's made me realize the greatness of Ernie Ladd. Mr. Ladd was pure heel, simply because he was a confident and eloquent black man who wasn't afraid to circumvent The Man's rules if necessary. You combine that with the fact that if you broke down your average deep south wrestling crowd at that time, or any time really, mainstream racists (meaning they just hate, not commit violence) would be a huge demographic, and it made Ernie Ladd the black bastard of professional wrestling. And you have to commend him, because at a time when you were heel by being a bloodthirsty African cannibal or a jive turkey caught up in acquiring bling as a black man (no caught up in the bling? then you're a babyface), he broke those simple-assed molds. You put him on the promo tip with The Masked Superstar, and you may have the most intelligent-sounding tag team in the history of people getting paid to theatrically grapple. And a time where Ole Anderson and Stan Hansen are your number one babyface tag team is a time far different than the one we live in now.

Superstar and Hansen start with headlocks and rollovers, because this is wrestling. Once Ole tags in, he can't control his hot temper and goes for the mask, losing his team's advantage, but infusing the crowd with adrenalin. And there's a slew of headlocks, but nobody chants "BORING!" Then Ernie Ladd tries to dive out but does the Cactus Jack trick of getting his head caught between the top two ropes, so Ole and Stan get to pummeling him, firing up the crowd. The old studio audiences were a great gauge of matches, as they were full of kids and women,

giving the overall sound a squealish touch, so that when things got hot, you could motherfuckin' tell. Ernie Ladd is strange, visually, because he's so tall and lanky, but he does lightweight things like holding his head high when getting tossed on a backflip, and tucking his head down at the last second. It looks awkward, but never off-beat.

TV time-limit expires, and then some other bad guy under the heelish spell of Bobby Heenan runs in and gives the hour-ending babyface beatdown. And if you lived in Carrollton, you could see more THAT MOTHERFUCKING NIGHT!

Sigh...I miss television wrestling that was relative to our immediate lives, locally, instead of just trying to add girth to our cable bills, globally. Late Saturday night antennae UHF is full of infomercials, and the most local wrestling promotion has internet webcasts, but no late night TV show on even the shittiest of channels. The new media is great for letting seven thousand people see your product, but you still end up with twenty-nine people at the door on a Friday night.

Fabulous Rougeaus vs Los Super Medicos- 7/7/1990; Bayamon, Puerto Rico- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: The matches board rules and my personal superstar is Zaza who posted a hundred and ninety El Santo matches one month and it ruled. So of course he would be the one to bring us the Rougeaus being hit in the heads with dirty diapers and paper cups. Super Medico I punches like a motherfucker and the crowd is just fucking INSANE in their hate for the Quebecois funnyboys. Rougeaus are fucking great rudos- doing five thousand fruity embellishments to set up a random Medico to punch them in the stomach. They are also complete shitheads when the ref isn't looking. By the fifth minute the crowd has run out of things to throw and Raymond Rougeau taunts the unarmed crowd and gets even more ungodly hate from the crowd. Jacques with the Boston Crab and Raymond drops the knee while the ref keeps SMII out of the ring. SMI is dead in the ring and the Rougeaus hug for a second time in gay loving gayness to INCENSE the already insane crowd. Rougeaus double team illegally on the Abdominal Stretch and folks leave their seats to go to their cars to get their guns. SMII tags in finally and it is all about the house afire dropkicks. Rougeaus cheat to win when the Rougeau and the Super Medico collide. The ref gets the Rougeau out of the ring and the Super Medico reverses the illegal pin by making his own illegal pin and the Super Medicos win and the Puerto Rican crowd puts all their guns and knives back in their coats. I wish all wrestling crowds were that fucking insane.

BOB BACKLUND V BIG JOHN STUDD- [AG]: 1982, I guess, since the commentary refers to Eddie Gilbert. This had some nifty stuff -- Benoit-esque headbutts from Backlund to Studd, as Studd held Backlund... in a bearhug. Backlund almost bodyslammed Studd. See, he would've collected a bounty if... God, Bob Backlund could not exactly carry the stiff. 5 years of this crap up top? No wonder Hogan was so over.

Rick Martel vs Sargeant Slaughter- WWF 1992- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: I've been running across a lot of Sgt Slaughter this year and the highlights of the Slaughter/Patterson match from the WWE 80s dvd made me remember how fucking great that match was and how underrated Slaughter was. This was on the matches board, (hello, young Victator!) and this was pretty much after the fact. But he is in with the fucking AWESOME Rick Martel so my interest is piqued. Slaughter as a face isn't nearly as fun as evil Slaughter but I figure he'll beat the hell out of you whichever side he's on. Martel is on top of his game and he works double time to set up Slaughter's spots- including going shoulder first into the ringpost through the ropes. Slaughter works from there and Martel is great getting the crowd to hate him while he is getting killed. Martel is also fun with the thumb to the throat for TRANSITION TO OFFENCE! Slaughter drives the knee into the shoulder and Slaughter isn't nearly as great as he was ten years previous, but he is still perfectly fine in 1992 and THEN HE TAKES A FUCKING RAY STEVENS BUMP OVER THE FUCKING TOP TURNBUCKLE TO THE FLOOR AND I SAY TO YOU- TELL ME THAT SARGEANT SLAUGHTER DOESN'T RULE. Try it. Then nice punches, hip toss, midgrade lariat. COBRA CLUTCH- fuck it. Sargeant Slaughter fucking ruled. Martel hits the ropes. Martel cheats with the atomizer of Arrogance and Martel STEALS THE WIN! These guys fucking ruled.

THE 2001 EAGLE PRO CRUISERWEIGHT TOURNAMENT- SUPER JUDIST/CRUSHER TAKAHASHI (CROWN) vs. HIROSHI SHIMADA/TAKAO IWASAKI (EAGLE)- PART VI- (by DEAN RASMUSSEN): "So this place is on Military Highway? Towards Virginia Beach, I'm assuming..."

"Oh hell no. It's on the Chesapeake side- out in Deep Creek by the used auto parts stores and stripclubs that keep converting into pool halls and back."

"Awesome. And your dad thought that this would be a place where a non-chain hamburger joint would thrive?"

"Well. My dad was always an idiot in a lot of ways- but never with money. He used to eat there all the time back when that was the respectable part of town. He always said it was the only place in Virginia where could get a barbecue that didn't 'suck a dog's ass' I believe were his own words for Carolina barbecue not from Carolina. He knew the guy who ran it- for like twenty years. He got my dad in the Masons and shit like that... hunting trips in Canada, that kinda late 60s, early 70s 'town elder' shit. So one day they find out that the owner's wife was dying of cancer, and they had to liquidate all of his assets so they could declare bankruptcy and go on Medicaid or Medicare- whichever one is for the poor- so she could get treatment. My dad said he would take possession of it and sell it back to him for a dollar when everything settles down..."

"And the owner died before he could sell it back?"

"Oh yeah. His wife died within a month and he followed her like three weeks later. It was one of those things like Bear Bryant dying as soon as he quit coaching the Crimson Tide... except pathetic and soul-crushing."

"So your dad was running the restaurant..."

"No, Mister Murphy was still running it day to day pretty much right to the end. Actually, it's strange. Dad never got Murphy's recipe for barbecue so it died with him. Pretty much ruined business for a while. It's crazy. My dad actually brought my Aunt Rosa in to make some barbecue... I am not lying when I say that she makes the best barbecue on earth- I've never had any better. Never. It was so hot it would make me hallucinate- but it wasn't just for the sake of being hot- it was spiced and seasoned to perfection... and yet when she left North Carolina and came to Virginia to make some for my dad- well, it WAS the best barbecue ever made in the state of Virginia, take that to the fucking bank- but it wasn't even one half as good as it tastes in North Carolina. I dunno. It's inexplicable. She did like seven sides of porkswoth. It's a fucking mystery. My guess is that the Sacred Soil Of Virginia makes Virginia generals invincible in the field in Virginia, the far less Sacred Soil of North Carolina makes their barbecue great while the eater is standing on Carolina soil. And also makes them drive like a fucking moron."

"So why were you so surprised when you found out that your dad owned it when they read the will?"

"My dad did a lot of shit. This was quite a minor facet to the story. When I saw Aunt Rosa at the funeral, I remembered. It was only for a few months and I always thought he sold it."

"Okay." They drive on. Each takes turns switching from bad radio station to bad radio station. They ruefully eye the ancient technology that was the 1982 cassette-radio car stereo.

"Jesus, I wish I still had cassettes. I can't take this shitty radio."

"Stupid cds. Hell, check under the seat, maybe my dad had some under there."

Krusher digs around. "Ew! I think that was a really old Snickers bar." He feels around some more. "Hey tapes. God, there's like ten under here.... Frankie Valley and the Four Seasons."

"Awesome- give it here. My dad love the Four Seasons." There is the moment of anticipation where one figures that the tape will be eaten by the 1982 Kenwood tape player- both men breathed deep. "C'mon.... c'mon...."

Frankie Valley arrives mid-lyric. "...talk like a man my soooooon..."

"Oh thank God."

"God, your dad listened to some questionable music."

"Well, he was my DAD. I'm sure your dad was motherfucking John Peel."

"Hey, I'm just saying. Oakridge Boys? Statler Brothers?"

"Oh the Statler Brothers suck..."

"Yeah."

"... except for one song."

"RIGHT."

"Fuck you- give it here."

Judist fast forwards it to "Elizabeth" by the Statler Brothers. Judist hits the comical Blaupunkt Powerbooster and the gentle ballad screams through the ancient speakers. The beauty of the song beats down on Krusher. The truth of the greatness of a Statler Brothers song is driven into his head.

"Okay. That was good."

"Oh trust me everything else is unlistenable garbage." Judist flips it over to play horrendously crappy Oakridge Boys songs that he remembers hating when his dad would sing along.

Krusher feels under the seat some more and pulls out a tape hidden under an old Tareyton 100s pack. "Hey what does 'Royal Antioch Quartet- Henderson- 8/73'"

"Wait. WHAT?"

"Royal Anti..."

"THE FUCKING ROYAL ANTIOCH QUARTET?!?! NO WAY."

"What is it?"

" No fucking way. Henderson, North Carolina, Sepemter 1973. My grandma used to tape their shows when they would come once a year. They were Gospel quartet... I can't explain it to you..."

Judist shoves the Oakridge Boys tape out and shoves the new found treasure in. There is burbling and the washed out sound of the first few seconds of tape transitions into the analog beauty of early 70s tape recorder technology as the metal that remains hits the audio head. Judist sings along, "One glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away... when I was a kid,

my mom and my Grandma would take us to a Gospel Singing every couple of months. Most of the quartets were fine four-part harmony and Jesus-wheezing. Royal Antioch Quartet had this tenor named Tommy Kraft and he was just a motherfucker. When I was 8 and had like the only true conversion experience in my life it was while he was singing a song 'Home Sweet Home.'" Krusher patiently listens not really feeling the allure. After "Turn your Radio On", the baritone introduces the other singers and the pretty crack country back-up band and says, "This is my favorite part of the show- as we are each man standing here a born again child of God... and now I want to introduce Tommy Kraft- yeah, he's the tenor so he sings the sissy parts [laughter from the audience]... and his song 'Home Sweet Home'..." It is a piano and Kraft begins singing.

"Yeah, this guy is like a real Irish tenor, I can tell."

"...in my beautiful, beuuuuutiful hoo-ooome..."

"Yeah, your right, I love he just soars right into the harmon..." Krusher looks over and notices that Judist has turned his face to the window and is wiping full tears away with the palm of his hand. Krusher wonders if it's memories of childhood or the dormant memories of his grandmother. Or if it's lament to his broken relationship with his God triggered by this heavenly voice captured over 30 years ago. For whatever reason, Krusher doesn't hide his own tears at seeing his best friend cry for the first time.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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